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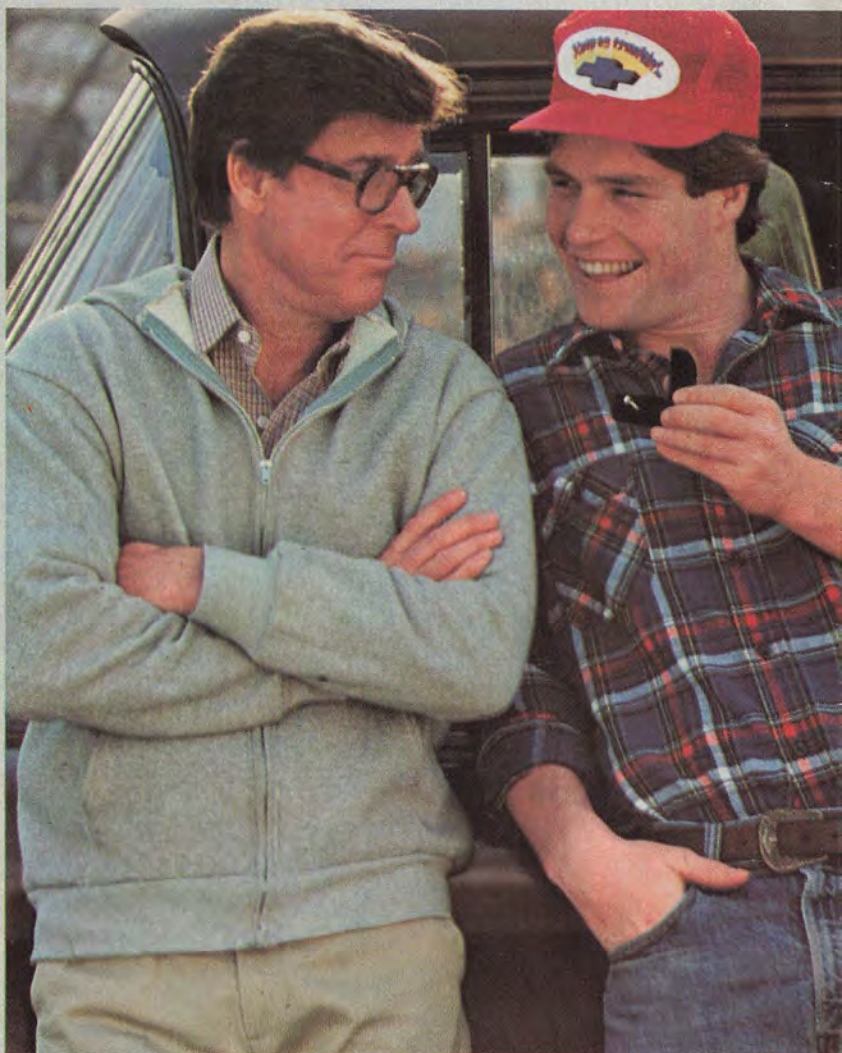
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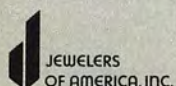
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# INSIDE SPORTS

VOLUME THREE

DECEMBER 1981

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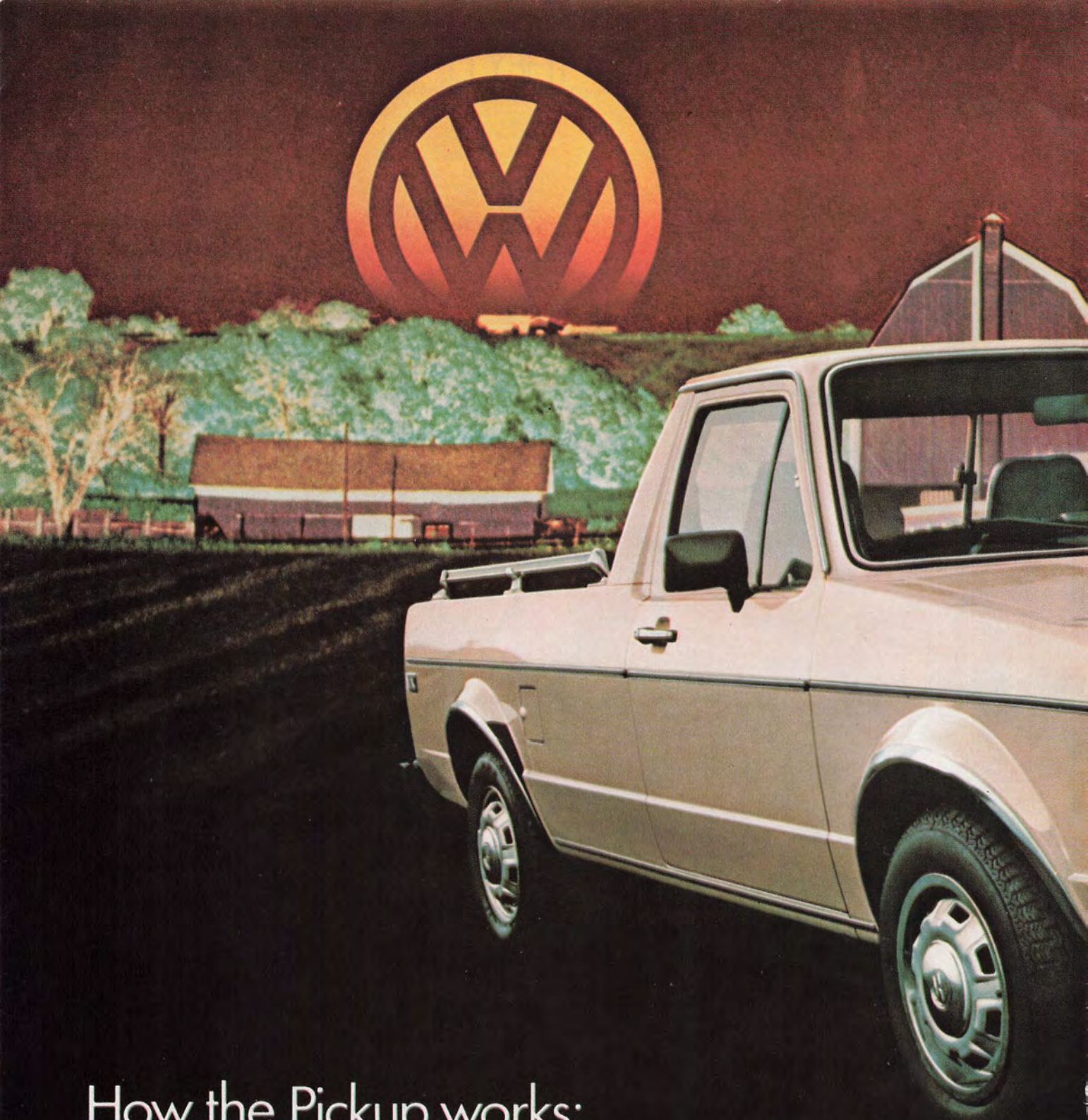
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DRAMBUIE OVER ICE THE NIGHT BEFORE

# COMEBACKS

**I** found your interview with Ron Davis ["Inside Track," October] quite interesting. In it, he refers to the owners as "arrogant," but calls one fan upset about the strike a "jerk." Those who disagree with him on hunting are "ignorant," as are, I would gather, those who disagree with him on anything (including membership in the "Ron Davis Fan Club"). Considering past comments by such eloquent statesmen as George Steinbrenner, Willie Randolph, Reggie Jackson, Rich Gossage, et al, I was wondering: Is insolence a prerequisite for being a New York Yankee?

KEITH KRABBE  
*Baltimore, Maryland*

**A**s a longtime subscriber to *The Sporting News* and *Sports Illustrated*, both of which I enjoy immensely, I was a shade skeptical when I initially started reading your publication (I have read all your issues). I was not certain that you would explore new territory, but rather merely plow again the same old acreage. I was in error. Your magazine does a superb job of viewing the American sports scene from a fresh angle. In my opinion, *INSIDE SPORTS* deserves its place in the sports triumvirate formed with the two aforementioned journals.

Not being much of a figure filbert, I greatly appreciate a meaningful approach to your regular "Numbers" feature. And I applaud your use of articles by Thomas Boswell and Calvin Fussman.

Please continue to maintain your different perspective on sports journalism. The literate public relishes it.

DANIEL MASCHINO  
*Dayton, Ohio*

**I** read with interest the article "Heaven Can't Wait—Or Can It?" [October]. As a former player for Atlantic High School in Delray Beach, Florida, and more recently as an assistant coach, I had to laugh as I read about how "Remuise Johnson beat the hell out of the whole Atlantic team."

In the three years Remuise Johnson played for Pahokee, Atlantic beat it 24-6, 14-13, 28-21. Surely, the street-

corner storyteller you talked to that day had too much "Musketell" in his system. Remuise Johnson was a great high school football player, but there's no way he ever stopped the running game of Atlantic.

TIM LOWRY  
*Delray Beach, Florida*

**A**lthough he didn't fare well against distaff basketballers while matriculating at the University of Missouri, all of us who worked alongside Cal Fussman considered him tops at *The Missourian*. I see it didn't take him too long to make it to the top, at *INSIDE SPORTS*. His piece on Rickey Jackson and Remuise Johnson again proves Cal always knew where the story was. Was it possible that after doing the story, he, too, found God? I suppose that's why he changed his name to Calvin from just Cal.

STEVE ALPER  
*Daily Racing Form*

**G**reat article on sports bars by Alan E. Cober [October]. We would like to see Cober come by Danker's West in Washington, D.C., to see our sports bar. We have stadium seats from old Griffith Stadium and our party room is called Danker's Dugout. We soon plan on a party room called Danker's Hall of Foam. We have pictures of a lot of baseball players on the wall (some are signed). Umpires have been known to come in, along with several Washington Bullets. Danker's West also runs weekly bus trips to Oriole games. The bar came from Al Capone's headquarters in Chicago.

RICHARD DANKER  
*Washington, D.C.*

**I** am writing to inform you of a great bar in Pittsburgh. I am referring to my place of employment, which consists of three floors whose walls are completely stocked with sports-celebrity photos. If your favorite sports star does not appear on the wall, that can only be attributed to the lack of picture-hanging space available.

On a daily basis the bar and restaurant attracts Steelers, Pirates, Penguins, etc. The sound of the Pittsburgh

Pipers still exists, but only silently. Their banner waves proudly above the stained glass window in the back of the main bar.

The saloon is comfortably embedded in downtown's Renaissance II growth. If the *Pittsburgh Magazine*-awarded 4-star drinks do not impress you, the oak, stained glass and old-fashioned fans will enhance you. I am talking about the only place in town where you really talk SPORTS!!! FROGGY'S!

LINDA MCCOMBS  
*Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania*

**Y**ou gravely erred in omitting Lindell AC in Detroit as one of the great sports bars in the nation. Lindell AC is not just a bar, but a tradition. For years, fans and heroes alike have mingled there. One proprietor, Jimmy Butsicaris, was recently portrayed by Alex Karras in a made-for-TV movie, *Jimmy B. and Andre*. Early in his managerial career, Billy Martin slugged one of his pitchers there, leading to his dismissal from Minnesota.

Centrally located near the homes of the Red Wings and Tigers (and for many years, the Pistons and Lions), Lindell AC is packed after all major sporting events, by second-guessing fans and unwinding athletes.

SCOT GRACE  
*Livonia, Michigan*

**W**ell over a year ago I felt compelled to do something I thought my 10-year-old son would enjoy in the absence of his father through a divorce. Lo and behold, I subscribed to *INSIDE SPORTS*.

Shortly after the issues started arriving, I began combing them from cover to cover. Then I hid them and astounded my son with my wealth of sports knowledge. He stands in awe each month while I reel off facts and figures from boxing to football and on down the line.

Thank you all for helping our family stay in one piece.

MICHELE SILCOX  
*Horsham, Pennsylvania*

P.S. Some day I'll have to fess up.

BY CHARLIE LEERHSEN

## Rick Barry

**E**arlier this year, a lady psychic told Rick Barry not to worry, that he would succeed as a broadcaster *in spite of everything*. The prediction perplexed the 14th highest scorer in NBA history, who thought that things were going swimmingly. After all, since he had retired from the Houston Rockets in 1980, ending a 14-year career that encompassed four seasons in the ABA, Barry had expanded his role at CBS to become a fulltime pro basketball colorman and, when his schedule permitted, he was a broadcaster for the Seattle SuperSonics. He had, in fact, become relaxed enough behind the mike to occasionally crack wise.

Perhaps it was nothing more occult than Barry's early attempts at humor that caused the psychic—his new wife's aunt—to see trouble ahead. In any case, by wondering aloud if the Philadelphia 76ers weren't celebrating St. Patrick's Day a bit late, when in reality the green ribbons affixed to their uniforms signified grief for the victims of the notorious child-murderer in Atlanta, Barry gave himself something to succeed in spite of. When he described co-commentator Bill Russell's smile, as portrayed in a 1956 photo flashed on the screen during a subsequent broadcast, as "a watermelon grin," it reaffirmed the belief of Van Gordon Sauter, then president of CBS Sports, that the telecast worked better with just Russell and a play-by-play man.

Things got even worse for the 37-year-old Barry when an expected switch to announcer for the Sonics' new pay-TV SuperChannel failed to materialize. "Rick wanted to bring his wife along on road trips," says a team official. "We have a rule against that."



*Barry and wife: Relaxing*

Barry calls the rule ridiculous. "She would have been my statistician—and I would have paid her expenses." Rather than travel without his second wife, Pam, whom he married on September 2, Barry ended negotiations. "We are a team," he says.

They are also unemployed. "We're looking in the area of marketing," he says. "It's something we both know."

Although he never had a deferred-income clause in his contracts, Barry isn't feeling any financial pressure. "Thank God for business managers and investments," he says.

Meanwhile, Barry makes occasional forays from the couple's new home in Mercer Island, Washington, to audition for broadcasting jobs. Recently he tested for a syndicated sports-wrapup show (the sponsor judged him too young) and a new game show (not enough experience). Despite the setbacks, he remains confident. "The right thing will come along. I'd love to do a game show or something like *Real People*."

## Jack Tatum

**H**e promoted his book, *They Call Me Assassin*, the way he played in the NFL for 10 years: hard. And in both instances he was rewarded handsomely for his efforts. But now the publicity tour and the career are over, and Jack Tatum doesn't do much besides hang around his Oakland manse.

Which is his idea of heaven. "I play some tennis, go horseback riding and occasionally buy or sell a piece of land that I've accumulated," says the 33-year-old former safety who spent nine seasons with the Oakland Raiders and one with the Houston Oilers before being waived last spring. "Some colleges and pro teams have approached me about coaching next year, but I don't know. I'm financially secure."

Tatum has even quit dwelling on Darryl Stingley, the New England Patriot wide receiver he paralyzed with a tackle in a 1978 exhibition game. "You start getting over everything after awhile, but that incident was never as big a thing in my life as the press made it out to be," Tatum says. The two men have not spoken since their collision.

Recently, Tatum took a vacation from his vacation and went to Hawaii. "He told me he was going to get a tan," says Bill Kushner, the coauthor of *Assassin*, which sold a whopping 100,000 copies in hardcover and has had a 425,000-copy paperback press-run. "Jack has a knack for doing nothing."

"There's nothing I enjoy more than people," Tatum says. "I've addressed quite a few youth groups lately on the subject of sportsmanship." ■

CHARLIE LEERHSEN is a Newsweek associate editor.

PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK HANAUER

## INSIDE TRACK

**S**ome people say that Dave Schultz single-fistedly reduced hockey to barbarism on ice. Playing left wing for the Philadelphia Flyers during the mid-1970s, Schultz was the prototypical Broad Street Bully. When he knocked out Montreal's John Van Boxmeer with one punch, his nickname, Hammer, became a byword in the National Hockey League.

In his second season he was penalized 348 minutes, a record. A year later it was 472. During an eight-year career, Schultz was penalty leader four times and played on two Stanley Cup winners. His behavior inspired Ontario attorney general Roy McMurtry to investigate violence in hockey. McMurtry concluded that Schultz set a "very bad example for young kids." Still, Schultz kept punching at such heavyweights as Terry O'Reilly, Pierre Bouchard and Wayne Cashman. He was top fist until routed by Larry Robinson and Clark Gillies.

In 1976, Schultz was traded to Los Angeles. In his first game against his former teammates he was mauled by Paul Holmgren. He was dealt to Pittsburgh in 1977. Then he moved to Buffalo, and finally the end came last year. **INSIDE SPORTS** sent Stan Fischler, who worked with Schultz on his autobiography, *The Hammer: Confessions of a Hockey Enforcer* (Summit, December), to speak with him.

**IS:** What are your feelings about your impact on the game?

**DAVE SCHULTZ:** I'm not proud about the way I carried on and I don't think the game should be played the way I did. The fact that they had to bring in numerous rules to control my

*'The worst is Linseman. If I was playing against him today, I'd beat the stuffing out of him.'*



### Dave Schultz

style—and the Flyers' style—is proof that a lot of people felt it was bad for the game. But, to be honest, I enjoyed my role *at the time* and, to this day, my ego is reinforced by the impact my name has had on the game.

**IS:** What price did you pay for that fame—or infamy?

**DS:** I suffered in many ways, but my wife, Cathy, suffered even more. When you're in a position of notoriety and receive a great deal of attention, you tend to lose perspective. The team, and my career, became far more important than my marriage, and what made it all the more unbearable for Cathy was that I tried to keep my career and our marriage separate.

**IS:** What effect did hockey have on your marriage?

**DS:** It almost ruined it. I married Cathy in 1972 before I became a regular. She's a beautiful woman and intelligent. She wanted to continue going to college after we were married, but I would have none of that. In my mind, she belonged at home like the other hockey wives and I insisted that she give up university, which she did—unwillingly.

**IS:** So you didn't treat your wife as an equal?

**DS:** No way. From what I learned listening to and watching the other players, hockey wives were nothing more than second-class citizens. Their place, we figured, was in the home, raising kids and cooking meals. Period. Cathy couldn't tolerate that.

**IS:** What precipitated your near breakup?

**DS:** My total absorption with hockey and my teammates at Cathy's expense. And my drinking. In my rookie year, Fred-

die (Shero) didn't play me as much as I would have liked and I got depressed. After a morning practice I'd head for Remy's, where most of the Flyers drank, and start putting away the beer. Meanwhile, Cathy was at home, stuck without a car, waiting for me. At six o'clock I'd phone and tell her I'd be home at seven. At seven I'd tell her eight. She wasn't too pleased when I checked in at midnight, stewed to the gills.

**IS:** How long did she put up with it?

**DS:** For a couple of months. One night I came home and found her loading clothes in a suitcase. She said, "I'm leaving!" Just like that. The whole hockey scene had gotten on her

nerves. When we were courting, she knew me as a quiet, sensitive person. Now I was fighting everyone in sight. This wasn't the same Dave Schultz she thought she was marrying. Then there was Bobby Clarke. He liked to have a closeness among the players, at the expense of the wives. Cathy resented him for that.

**IS:** Did your relationship improve from that point on?

**DS:** No, it got worse. I managed to keep Cathy from leaving by promising to change things, but the more popular I became the less time I seemed to have for my wife. By the time we won our first Stanley Cup my ego was so inflated that I had lost all sense of reality. On a road trip to Los Angeles the next season, I opened my suitcase and there was a long letter in it from Cathy, telling me why she was sick and tired of being a hockey player's wife. All of a sudden *her* problems began to have an impact on me. "Hey," I said to myself, "she's a human being, too." I called and begged her not to leave. I called her every night until we got home.

**IS:** What finally saved the marriage?

**DS:** My awareness of her problems was a beginning, but as long as we were in Philadelphia there were problems. Getting traded to Los Angeles turned it around. It got me out of the limelight and down to earth. On top of that, Clarkie wasn't around to bug her with his influence. Mike Murphy was our captain and he couldn't have cared less about the boys-night-out stuff that Clarkie promoted. Instead of being gung ho about hockey, I thought about my family.

**IS:** How is your marriage now?

**DS:** It's a lot stronger, but this didn't happen overnight. You just don't make a marriage perfect in 24 hours by saying, "Okay, let's have a better marriage." Our communication is better. We talk to each other about things we're involved in, which we didn't do in Philly. Now we're more aware of each other's needs. In Philly, I not only ignored Cathy, I held her back. Cathy will be starting university this winter, taking sociology classes, and I'm tickled about that. I'm devoting more time to her—just being with her—and I'm lots more involved with the children than I ever was. I've come to realize that even though Cathy used to do so much in the house, she didn't really get a feeling of accomplishment or gratification. It was something that I ignored. I just took her for granted. Now she has developed feelings of self-worth and I've encouraged her.

**IS:** How did Clarke develop the special closeness on the Flyers?

**DS:** He was a great organizer. When we were on the road he'd get us together in team meetings. Not that he was the *only* guy with input. There were a couple of veterans—Ed Van Impe, Joe Watson, Barry Ashbee—who had something to say, but Clarkie was *the* captain. He'd have the boys-night-out kinds of things, and he had these ideas about what should or shouldn't be done. He wasn't crazy about wives coming out to the airport to meet the players when we got back from a road trip. Clarkie was encouraged by management. Freddie wanted the guys together and Clarkie was simply doing what the coach encouraged. On the other hand, we didn't respond to Clarkie like we were infants. He was constantly trying to get the guys together under circumstances other than sitting together in the dressing room.

**IS:** Now that you're away from the game, how do you feel about Clarke?

**DS:** As a hockey player and competitor, I have a lot of respect for the man. Nobody ever put out more energy to win than Clarkie. He wasn't voted MVP three times for nothing. He influenced me as a player; I learned a lot from his dedication to the game.

**IS:** Didn't Clarke live by the sword?

**DS:** He took advantage of a good thing. It's public knowledge that he was a dirty player. He was aggressive and he didn't have to back up a lot of things he did because of the team behind him. He shouldn't have done some of the stick swinging he did. Because he was one of the top players in the league he was protected by hockey in general, by the officials. Players didn't retaliate against Clarkie because of who he was.

**IS:** At least one NHL player has called Clarke a coward because he would start fights and let others finish them for him.

**DS:** He got away with a lot of cheap shots and he let a lot of others fight his battles. I never respected him for that. He was a dirty player who was lucky he had guys like me, Bob Kelly, Moose Dupont and Mel Bridgman to back him up. I would have liked to see how tough he'd have been if he was playing for Colorado.

**IS:** Did Clarke do anything personal to offend you?

**DS:** I always had the feeling he played a part in my trade to Los Angeles. I can't prove it; it's a gut reaction.

**IS:** You weren't exactly St. Francis of Assisi when you played. How can you blow the whistle on Clarke?

**DS:** There's a big difference between hitting a guy with your stick and hitting him with your fist. My policy was that the gloves came off the second I got into a fight. I hated stick swingers.

**IS:** Did you ever encounter drug use among your teammates?

**DS:** I saw some of it, but to this day I'm convinced I saw only the tip of the iceberg. I'm sure I was around more people who were using drugs than I was aware of. I didn't have a practiced eye for detection, except when it was blatant, which it was at times. I didn't see any of it on the Flyers, but I did with the Kings and Penguins. When I got to Pittsburgh I couldn't believe it; some players were more interested in smoking a joint than playing hockey. It wasn't so bad with the Kings, although there was one guy who got into stronger drugs. He was talented, but his career went down and then he was out of the NHL. Maybe if he had laid off the stuff, he could have been a star.

**IS:** How much did the drug use affect their playing ability?

**DS:** Anyone who thinks he can take alcohol or pot without it affecting him is crazy. It *has* to affect you. When I hear someone say, "Oh, it doesn't bother me," I know the guy is kidding himself. Sure, limited consumption doesn't have too much of an effect, but what happens is that people consume more and more, and before they realize it they've got a problem. I saw this happen time and again.

**IS:** What was your own experience with drugs?

**DS:** When I was with the Kings and we were playing in Boston during the playoffs, we had a day off and some of the guys were smoking. I had a couple of puffs and didn't like it. This was an embarrassing scene for me. What I didn't like was the feeling of not being totally in control of myself.

**IS:** Are there any Dave Schultzes in the NHL now?

**DS:** There are guys who do a lot of fighting, but nobody does it the way I did. There was one thing that set me apart from the others. I used to psych myself up better than anyone. I'd be in my hotel room the afternoon of a game and I'd be thinking about the game that night and the tough guys on the opposition. If we were playing Boston, I'd visualize Terry O'Reilly and I'd picture us colliding and me dropping my gloves and going at it with him. Then, when we banged into each other in the game, I was prepared. But more than that, I got crazier *after* a fight when other guys were cooling out. I'd throw a tantrum and

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argue with the referee and the fans. It was a routine I had. I was intense and it all came out in this frenzy. There isn't anyone around today who can get himself worked up the way I did.

IS: Should fighting be taken out of the game?

DS: It would be good to eliminate. Some fans, who only come out to see blood, would stop coming, but an end to fighting would mean new fans. I give the NHL credit for at least introducing some rules that are putting a curb on fighting. If I was playing today, my game would be legislated right out of existence. And there's nothing wrong with that.

IS: If you were president of the NHL today and a player carried on the way you did in the mid-1970s, how would you handle him?

DS: I'd be a lot tougher than Clarence Campbell was with me. I'd take into account the way the public and the press are feeling about hockey violence. What was good in the 1930s isn't good for hockey today. Instead of fining a fighter, I'd suspend him and I'd make the suspension so severe it would be a lesson to the rest of the players. Campbell was pretty easy on me and the rest of the Flyers. I got hit with a lot of fines but I never paid a cent. So, all he did was encourage us to fight even more. If a Dave Schultz came along today and I was president, I'd take him aside and say, "Look, fella, we're not selling bloodshed anymore, we're selling the skills of the game." I'd back it up with the toughest rules the league ever had.

IS: You frightened a lot of people. Were there any players who really scared you?

DS: More than you think. I underwent a dramatic personality change over the years. When I played junior hockey I was a coward. Then I got tough in the minors and by the time I got to the Flyers I had a reputation as quite a fighter. But even in my heyday I wasn't comfortable with a guy like Wayne Cashman. He was always waving his stick and I figured he was crazy enough to take my eye out. Stan Jonathan and John Wensink also gave me the creeps. But there was one guy I wouldn't fight under any condition: Nicky Fotiu. When I was with the Penguins, Fotiu kept goading me, trying to get me to drop my gloves and fight with him. I said the hell with this; I knew he was a PAL boxing champ and that he'd beat the crap out of me. I just let him hit me—he got a couple of penalties for it—and I got myself a goal.

IS: What was the lesson there?

DS: It was the tip-off that this old gunfighter was shooting blanks. I knew it was only a matter of time before I would become obsolete.

IS: What are your impressions of the Flyers since you retired?

DS: They still take unnecessary penalties and they're still trying to live up to their Broad Street Bully image; which means they're constantly overreacting to even good, clean aggressive play. They think nobody's supposed to hit them. When they're given a clean check, they retaliate. The worst of them all is Ken Linseman. If I was playing against him today, I'd beat the stuffing out of him.

IS: What do you find objectionable about Linseman?

DS: I saw him skate behind Rob McClanahan after the whistle and take the feet right out from under him. You could kill a guy doing that. And Linseman skates to the bench as if nothing happened. The weird thing is that most Philly fans think it's the *other* team that's chippy, not the Flyers. But that's the general attitude of any hometown fan. Some Philly fans, however, are realizing that the Flyers' tactics have gone way past the point of legitimate aggressive hockey.

IS: Are there any other players you dislike?

DS: Bobby Schmautz. He was pretty bad with his stick. Dennis Polonich. He was a little guy, always running around getting away with sneaky stuff. A real instigator. Actually, most of these guys had a job to do, which was to cause trouble. On another level, Orest Kindrachuk used to bug me; he had an air about him. He thought he was better than anyone else.

IS: Who are the more admirable players?

DS: Bob Nystrom. I once was playing with a broken thumb when I got into a fight with Nystrom. We started to drop our gloves but mine wouldn't come off because it was tied to the bandage. Nystrom could have killed me but he realized I was in trouble and said, "Forget it." I respect Larry Robinson. He's a big one who plays the game the way it should be played; the same with Bryan Trottier. I always liked guys who worked hard and had something to show for busting their chops, like Terry O'Reilly. He got to the top through sheer dedication.

I can't forget Barry Ashbee. He'd been in the minors for almost a lifetime and finally made it to the NHL. He had a strong character—positive kind of character—and he left an im-

pression on everyone who played with him, or against him for that matter. Two other teammates—Bernie Parent and Eddie Van Impe—get a lot of respect from me.

IS: You played for Shero and Scotty Bowman. Were they as good as they've been touted?

DS: Freddie was so far better than any coach I ever had that there's no point in even mentioning a runnerup. He not only analyzed the game up, down and sideways, he had a special knack—a gentleness—of getting his points across. Even when he wanted me to play the wild man, he did it with a kind of subtlety that was unique in a hockey coach. One time Keith Magnuson was messing up Ricky MacLeish. Another coach would have been yelling and screaming for someone to go after Magnuson. Not Freddie. He calmly walked over to me and said, "Okay, Schultz!" So, I went out on the ice and belted Magnuson. Bowman's philosophy was the opposite. He believed in coaching by intimidation; by putting fear into his players to make them produce. He was a screamer and he had his pet black sheep; guys like Rick Martin whom he'd give all kinds of verbal abuse. Any player would sooner play for a coach who treated you like a human being than for one who used scare tactics like Scotty.

IS: What do you know about Shero's alleged "drinking problem"?

DS: Just like the players, Freddie liked to have his beer after a game. After I left Philly people discussed it as some difficulty with Freddie. There were mysteries—like the time we were in the playoffs and he got mugged late one night in Atlanta. No one knows where he was and Freddie never did say how it happened.

He was the kind of guy who liked to go to one bar, have a drink and move on to the next. One time during the playoffs we had this cocktail hour the night before the game. We had about five kids, up as emergency replacements, with the team. We all had something to eat and a few drinks and then went up to bed. Freddie had a few beers with the young guys. The next morning he was missing from practice. On the road, Freddie always called a meeting at 11 at night to be sure all the guys were in. A couple of times I could tell that he'd been into the sauce a bit. I don't know if it became a serious problem, but I suspect that as he lost his power with the Flyers it got worse. After I left I heard stories. My vision of Freddie drinking was him sitting in his office after a

practice sipping beer. He liked his beer.

**IS:** Hockey players like to indulge in pranks with teammates. Did you ever get involved in one that you regretted?

**DS:** Sure. Cutting a guy's hair against his will was a regular thing that I never liked. It's embarrassing and it's not funny. When Mel Bridgman was a rookie and we were in Vancouver, he had a girlfriend out there and the guys knew about it. They shaved his head till he was bald. He was so embarrassed he wore a hat all the time, so they cut a hole in the top of the hat. I saw guys reduced to crying by some of the practical jokes—when they blindfolded a guy and then poured water in his mouth. It was meant to be fun, but most of the time it wasn't. Bridgman almost left the team after that hair-cutting routine.

**IS:** Is there a subtle feeling of anti-intellectualism among NHL players?

**DS:** To a certain extent. Most of us are reared on hockey from the minute we learn to skate and it becomes like a religion to us in Canada. When kids like me got to junior hockey we were still high school age, but we were following a professional schedule. But I see a change happening now. A lot of pros are coming out of the colleges.

**IS:** Emotionally, how have you felt about hockey since you retired?

**DS:** At first I didn't go to any games; I lost interest altogether. When it was on TV I'd spin the dial, take a brief look at whatever game was on and continue spinning until I found something else. A lot of the tension I had experienced as a player was gone. I didn't have the fear that somebody who was bigger or stronger was going to come along and beat my brains in. That made me a happier man. Then I got a call from the Flyers' TV people asking me to do some commentary. I handled a Flyers-Sabres game when Danny Gare and Behn Wilson got into a mean stick-swinging battle. That turned me off.

**IS:** If your two boys embarked on a hockey career the way you did—as enforcers—what would you advise them?

**DS:** I'd tell them to do the *opposite* of what their father did: Get out of hockey or tell the coach or owner, "I'm not going to earn my living by beating heads." I don't want to see either of my kids turn into professional goons. I don't want them to go along blindly with management the way I did. I also would tell them they will have to make big sacrifices if they want to get to the top, but that there's more to success than the almighty dollar. ■

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## Fly Now, Play Later

BY MURRAY OLDERMAN

**A**t 6:30 a.m. on Saturday, Brooke, 4, and Kady, 3, woke Mark van Eeghen by climbing into bed with him, rumpling his hair and bouncing off his chest. Amber would have joined in, but she's only one year old. Daddy was going off on a business trip. Brooke wanted to be sure he'd be back in time for her birthday party on Monday.

Mother, Nancy, fixed Mark his usual breakfast: melon, a piece of whole wheat toast with melted cheese, black coffee. At 8:15, she piled the kids into the Datsun station wagon and drove Mark from their home on Bay Farm Island to his company's complex on Doolittle Drive in Oakland.

Mark was dressed casually in a short-sleeved white shirt, open at the preppy button-down collar, dark slacks, no coat, no tie. He carried a leather shoulder bag that contained a change of underclothes, an extra T-shirt, a toothbrush, some stationery to write a few letters and a paperback, one of the *Wagons West* series by Dana Fuller Ross. Also an alarm clock. "I don't trust wakeup calls in hotels," explained Mark.

At the office, he huddled with his coworkers for final meetings to review business plans. Then Nancy and the kids drove him to Oakland International Airport. United Airlines Charter Flight 5087, carrying the Oakland Raider football team and its

60-person entourage, was scheduled to leave for Denver at 2 p.m.

Besides the regular 45-man squad of the defending Super Bowl champions—including fullback van Eeghen—the contingent included 10 coaches, three team physicians, three trainers, five equipment people, two game-film cameramen, two photographers, two field-phone technicians, two radio people, some 13 media people from the Bay Area (four or five reporters from area newspapers that insist on paying their own way travel separately), eight Raider administrative staff members, the managing general partner of the team and his wife, and seven guests of

management. Also, 4,730 pounds of football gear. If they had left on Friday, as they do for trips to the East Coast, the Raiders would have transported another three-quarters of a ton of practice equipment.

The planning for this mass movement—a logistical exercise that NFL teams undertake 10 times a season at a total cost exceeding \$1 million—is as intricate as a logarithmic table. It started last spring when Al LoCasale, executive assistant to Al Davis (Oakland's managing general partner), updated his master checklist, first drawn up in 1970 and revised in 1975. The checklist is subheaded: advance preparations, predeparture, travel, arrival, lodging, meals, movie, game-day activity, press-radio-TV, postgame, return

flight and wrap-up—with each area the responsibility of a different Raider employee. Earlier Ken LaRue, Oakland's business manager, had huddled with coach Tom Flores to settle meal times, practice times and lodging sites for the entire season.

The checklist for the Denver trip covered seven typewritten pages and 214 different items, ranging from a movie screen for Flores' hotel suite to the designation of a hospital in case of injury. Someone also checks to see that three kinds of diet soda—Fresca, Diet 7UP and Tab—as well as a sufficient number of decks of playing cards will be available on the plane. "Not everybody likes the same kind of diet soda," LoCasale explains. "And, for some

reason, the airlines often shortchange us on the cards. I think they think we're stealing them."

The plane, a DC-8 with 238 seats, was leased for \$56,000. The troupe would require 90 rooms and four suites at the Denver Marriott Hotel, at a cost of \$3,800. The bill for meals would be \$2,900. Four buses to haul the Raiders and company were hired for \$2,000. Trucks to cart the baggage would add \$700. Entertainment for the media on Saturday night at the Wellshire Inn with vintage wines and food, ranging from four-rib rack of lamb marinated in honey and lemon to pineapple chicken, was \$1,500.



ILLUSTRATION BY JEFFERY SMITH

Everything was meticulously arranged. The plane's passenger cabin, as specified by the Raiders, was 10° cooler than normal. No beer. No wine. Seats up front, where coaches and media sat, were pinned with name tags.

Before van Eeghen boarded, La Rue gave him an envelope with \$20 in cash, his per diem for the short trip. He carried no other money. "I'm here to play football," he said. "I don't need any money."

When the team arrived at the Marriott, an envelope with his room key was on a special table in the lobby. He changed and went downstairs to a special buffet for the team, a feast of prime ribs, barbecued spareribs, fried chicken, corn, beans, salad, ice cream sundaes and assorted beverages. The cost per player was \$29, plus 22 per cent for tax and tip. A total of 75 pounds of spareribs, 200 pieces of chicken, three big prime ribs and 50 milkshakes was consumed. The players made their own huge sundaes.

Then van Eeghen boarded a special bus to take in a movie, returned to his room, took a mild sedative at 9:30 p.m. and fell asleep by 10:15.

"In 1976," recalled van Eeghen, "when we played New England in

Foxboro, my first year as a starter, I was going back to my home country. I'm from Cranston, Rhode Island. I bought 130 tickets for the game. I'll never forget staring at the ceiling at four in the morning, thinking about who might be there. I was tired, mentally whipped. We lost, 48-17. That was the last time I didn't take a sleeping pill the night before a game."

(NFL players are not given complimentary tickets for road games. Phil Villapiano, a former Raider linebacker, set the team record of 201 tickets when five busloads of friends and relatives came down from New Jersey to watch him play in Baltimore. For Denver, halfback Kenny King was high with 48 tickets, at \$12.10 each. It was the closest he would play to his native North Texas in 1981.)

Van Eeghen was up at 8:30 on Sunday for the pregame meal scheduled for 10. He and center Dave Dalby set up a table and started with three pots of coffee. The players were fed their choice of New York strip steaks, eggs, pancakes, French toast and grits. (The grits became a tradition when Gene Upshaw joined the team 15 years ago.)

Bill Glazier of the Raider public relations staff, who had been in Denver

since Tuesday, had carefully timed the route from the hotel to the stadium. His staff dispensed tips to the aides in the visiting-team locker room, to the bus drivers, to the police escort. Earlier he had given a bellhop at the hotel \$15 for keeping tabs on the weather during the week.

The team buses left the Marriott at 11:45 a.m. for Mile High Stadium, arriving 15 minutes later. Van Eeghen sat on the left side of the bus, as he always does.

The Raiders lost to the Broncos 9-7, and van Eeghen, who started the day with 5,757 yards rushing for his career—most ever by a Raider back—added only 30 yards to the total.

After the game, LaRue handed him his first paycheck of the season. Then the four buses, leaving as soon as each filled up, took the group to the airport for a 7 p.m. departure. The return flight was quiet. It always is after a loss. Mark van Eeghen's business trip ended with a touchdown—by the airplane in Oakland at 8:30 p.m. ■

MURRAY OLDERMAN is a syndicated columnist and cartoonist. His most recent book is *Super!, the story of the Raiders' Super Bowl championship season*.

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# Howard Just Wants To Be One of the Boys

BY RON POWERS

**M**ost *Monday Night Football* fans probably never even heard it. The line was so utterly improbable; so casually thrown away under the breath; so lacking in reference to anything discussed on the air up to that moment, that it must have passed beneath most people's consciousness. Archie Bunker doing a quick *grand jeté*. Dan Rather crossing his eyes. A pickup truck on *The Dukes of Hazzard* stopping for a yellow light. Couldn't happen. Must've been dozing. Trouble with the damn set.

And yet for those who did mark it, the utterance might have thrown a shaft of light into the gargantuan hive of neural collisions that is Howard Cosell's persona; more light, perhaps, than all the truckloads of plutonium-rich polysyllables the man has hauled across the ABC airwaves these last dozen years.

To set the story line—as Howard is wont to say—we pick up the action in the fourth quarter of the Miami-Buffalo game October 12. Joe Ferguson had just thrown a long, incomplete pass. “And Buffalo,” intoned Frank Gifford, “struggling here in the second half, will have to punt.”

The next voice belonged to Cosell. Quoth the Great One: “We’ve had a lot of fun here, haven’t we?”

There ensued the most imperceptible moment of dead air, as if the other

two announcers in the booth were running a quick check of their bodies, to see whether that small detonation had contained any projectiles. Then Don Meredith, his syntax sputtering only slightly, fell upon the loose thought and smothered it. “Yeah. Still is. I’m havin’ a good time.”

Came the Cosellian caw once again: “Long time. Twelfth year.”

And that was that.

All right. Not a Great Moment in Prose. Not a line to hang up there alongside “Heaven for climate—hell for society,” or “Silence is the perfectest herald of joy.” And yet, coming from a man who has disdainfully

presided over the shaping of American reverence for Big Football since the height of the counterculture era, the remark has its fascinating, instructive aspects.

Since the inception of *Monday Night Football* in 1970, regular viewers have from time to time detected a certain testiness, a soupçon of frost, between Cosell and his colleagues in the booth. ABC insiders swear that no secret feuds exist. Nevertheless, an unmistakable tone of hauteur that frequently creeps into Cosell’s voice fortifies this impression: On any given Monday, the popular myth has it, Howard will crack under the strain of dealing with lesser minds—journalistic amateurs—and run amok in the booth, wielding a bronze plaque of Edward R. Murrow to devastating effect.

Such a moment has never occurred. Instead, *Monday Night Football* has boiled and bubbled along with all the barely controlled tensions of a classic Norman Lear comedy series. Howard has sulked; Howard has snarled; Howard has told the press that he is tired of the act—“You think I actually look forward to another year in the booth with Dandy Don and Faultless Frank?” he demanded of an *INSIDE SPORTS* reporter a year ago. For their part, Dandy and Faultless often have seemed to subtly withdraw from Cosell’s perorations into a private, ex-athletes’ preserve of their own, sharing expert judgments and insights that cut a crucial distance between themselves and the civilian beside them.

During the Dallas-New England game September 21, Butch Johnson leaped high for a touchdown pass. Cosell immediately unleashed a tirade against the defender, Mike Haynes:

“... And that’s what you call non-aggression in a defensive back. He had the play covered *totally* ... and he stood there and he let Butch *steal* it from him. *Watch* again. *Total* nonaggression.”

Gifford: “Well, he’s one of the best who ever played this game. ...”

Meredith: “Let’s look again. Look at Haynes, No. 40. He’s back in the end zone—Butch makes an adjustment at the end of this pattern. That



really is a spectacular adjustment. . . . Good move, Butch."

Cosell: "Well, I don't care *how* great Haynes is . . . he *blew* that."

Meredith: (laughter)

When they do respond directly to Howard, Gifford and Meredith have been inclined in recent years to deflect Cosell's hyperbole with suave understatement. Recall the rain-drenched Pittsburgh-Miami game September 10 when an excited Cosell opened the telecast with all the aplomb of Alexander Haig: "A few moments *ago* a bolt of *lightning* struck our ABC *camera* in the *booth*! . . . What about *Miami*? For *that* story, the *Giffer*."

"First, about that lightning hitting the camera, Howard," began Gifford coolly, "if it'd hit the camera, I'd have

been out of here long ago. It hit close, you're right. . . ."

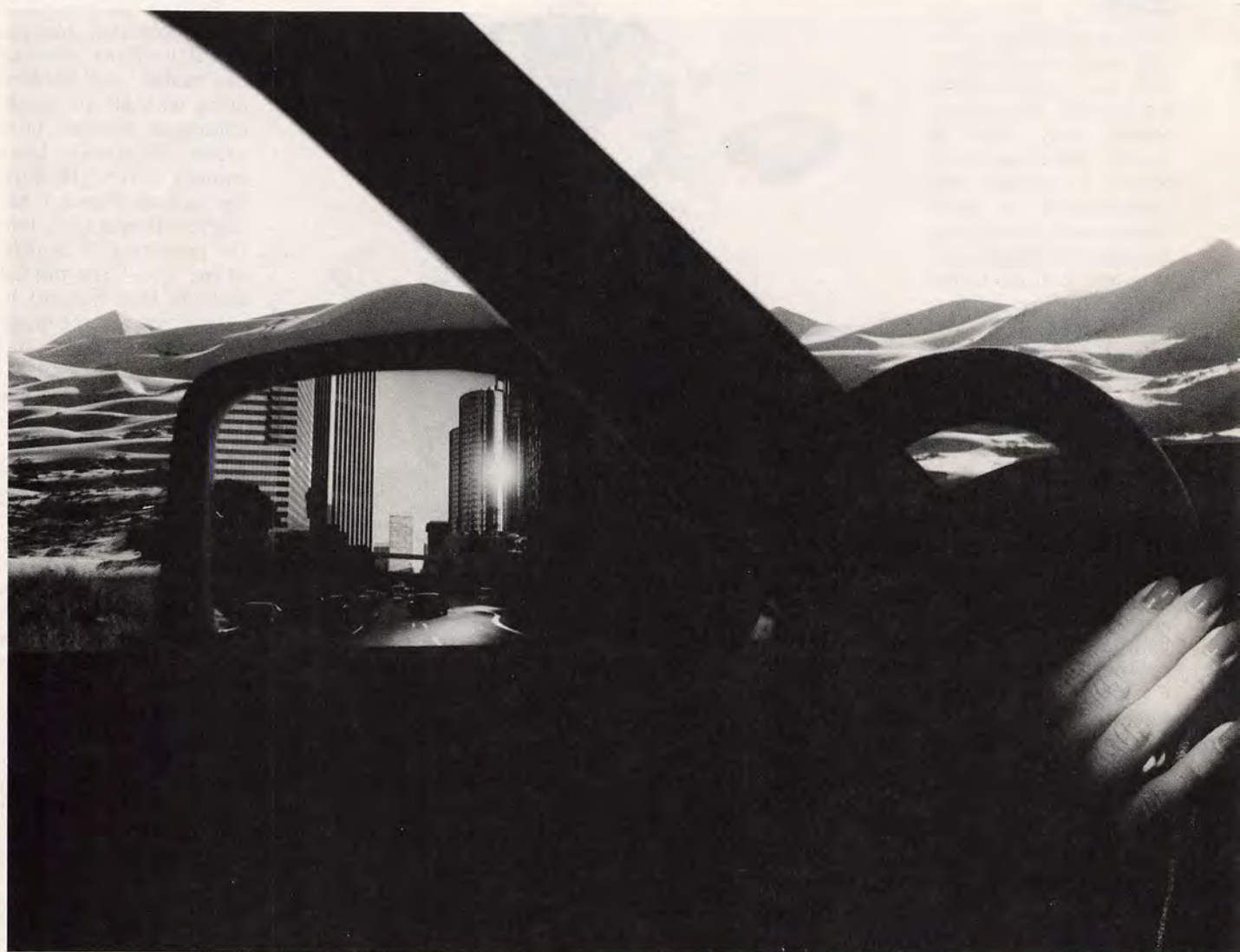
No, no. This is *precisely the problem*: What Gifford and other mere mortals never seem to grasp is that thunder and lightning always attend Howard's wake. Planets pause in their orbits. Horses, beauteous and swift, turn wild in nature, break their stalls, fling out, contending 'gainst obedience. No wonder the Humble One occasionally seems melancholy. The others simply do not comprehend the epic scale of his life.

And yet there are signs that Howard is—well, if not *mellowing*, exactly, at least beginning to experiment with enjoying his work. Throughout this football season, and during the late baseball playoffs as well, Cosell has

been noticeably eager to sound out the opinions of his colleagues. It has been Cosell, more often than not, who has stitched together the continuity of a play-by-play with a friendly or even (God help us) witty aside.

Then there is the emerging phenomenon of Cosell, the Athlete's Pal. In seasons past, Howard's tendency has been to look upon the working jock as, to borrow from Ring Lardner, a side dish he had not ordered. Muhammad Ali was an exception. But face-to-face with most players, Cosell has taken an almost manic glee in applying the question that provokes, insinuates, challenges, even insults.

Contrast that trademark trait with this exchange during the Bills-Eagles telecast September 17:



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Cosell: "He's incredible, Greg Brown. A free agent. *Started* at Kansas State ... *don't* be misled by that... Went to another school, didn't make it there. Went into ... *business* as a construction worker."

Gifford: "Well, if you call building things, working as a construction worker, a business. ..."

Cosell: "Well, you know, you try to be *kind* about it. ..."

Huh?

Wait, there's more. Just one week previously, Cosell had agonized about how the burdens of his high office had prevented him from coming to the aid of a football player in need. The player was Fred Dryer, the Ram player imprisoned on the sidelines by his own no-cut contract.

Cosell noted that Dryer had tried to telephone him "three times today. Unfortunately, I didn't return any of them." And Howard went on: "Fred's an old personal friend from when he was a top draft choice with the Giants years ago. Now, I *feel* for him *emotionally*. But he wanted a *legal opinion* from me, I am told, and I'm not in a position as a *journalist*, to be an advocate either to an owner or a player."

Gifford: "Third down and seven ... hope you got that, Fred."

Meredith: "I have two years of pre-law at SMU, so if Fred needs me, he can call."

**P**eople close to the Humble One say, privately, that Cosell is embittered

over the fact that he has never harvested the kind of approval, from public or industry, that his contributions to "sports journalism" might merit. (Cosell has never won an Emmy; moreover, he is a reflexive foil for TV critics, his very name a sort of abbreviated code for calumny.)

All of which is true. But though the critics may have established Cosell as a monolithic "Mouth" to the outside world, at least some who share the microphone with him concede the man's complexities. Jim Palmer, who first worked postseason baseball telecasts with Cosell in 1978, has learned to separate Howard the public personage from Howard the broadcast pro.

"Howard's Howard," says Palmer. "He has his idiosyncrasies. He has



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that certain aura of notoriety that follows him, and he plays to it. But working with him is like playing with Reggie Jackson. The bottom point with Reggie is that when he gets on that field, he does the job. So does Howard. After a telecast with him, I'm exhausted—more so than I am from pitching. It is physically draining to be there for three hours, a director in your ear, listening to Howard, watching the game. But, yes, he works with you. He makes the themes develop."

**W**e've had a lot of fun here, haven't we?"

There is a wistfulness in that sentence. It's possible to hear in it the suppressed voice of a man who never learned how to unbutton his shirt collar and have a few grins with the guys in the neighborhood; of a man who never really learned the meaning of, "Now comes Miller time."

It is possible that Howard Cosell the Uncompromising Reporter, the Keeper of the Seal of Sports Journalism, the magisterial Teller of It Like It Is, has been stealing plaintive glances all along at his less driven comrades. It is possible that he may secretly envy Meredith's self-joshing country jive, or covet Gifford's blood pressure (Gifford as neutral and unvindictive as Switzerland). It is possible that Cosell, at 61, would like to join the party—that "We've had a lot of fun here, haven't we?" is his "Rosebud."

If that is true, it presents an interesting paradox: For in his very (and very public) aloofness from the earthy folk-pleasures of pro football over a dozen prime-time seasons, Cosell has managed to put the final validating stamp on the sport as a kind of secular religion. He has done for the National Football League what Walter Cronkite did for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. If he cares enough to cover it, the reasoning went in both cases, it must be important.

At the conclusion of that Miami-Buffalo telecast, Cosell pointed out—told it like it was—that he would not be with the *Monday Night* crew the following week because of his assignment to cover the World Series.

And then, damned if it didn't happen again. "But, Danderoo—I'm gonna miss you."

Gosh. ■

RON POWERS is a television-and-radio critic who received a Pulitzer Prize. His most recent book is *Toot-Toot-Tootsie, Good-bye*, a novel.

# Dressed To Kill

BY R. D. ROSEN

**L**et other sports fans have their esoteric statistics—the earned-run averages of obscure middle-inning relievers, the foul-shooting percentages of long-forgotten 11th men, the score of every Falcons-Saints game. I suffer from a different obsession: professional-team uniforms. At the drop of a trivia question, I can describe the four Washington Redskin helmet designs of the last 20 years, name the only city where the pro teams wear the same colors (Pittsburgh—but the Penguins changed to black and gold last year), tell you the only two teams in the four major sports that wear brown (San Diego Padres and Cleveland Browns) or point out the only uniform that has the players' names on the back *below* the numerals (Kansas City Kings).

Piece of cake? How about the only NFL team that doesn't have stripes on its jerseys at home or on the road (Oakland Raiders). Still not hard enough? Then rank the major leagues, NFL, NBA and NHL according to the number of teams whose uniform colors are red, white and blue (baseball 11, NBA 6, NHL 5 and NFL 4). Try this: None of the four NFL teams that wears red, white and blue has played in a Super Bowl.

I can't help myself; I've been afflicted since childhood. In junior high school, I filled the margins of my note-

books with uniform designs. I spent several days in social studies evolving the uniforms of the Cincinnati Ravens, an NFL team I had invented. (A few years later, the Atlanta Falcons were formed, appropriating the Ravens' red-and-black scheme.)

In 1968, when it was announced that Charles Finley's new Oakland A's would be wearing gold and green, I had a dream in which I pictured every detail. I was once offered a psychoanalytic hypothesis to explain my obsession: that as a child I must have been fascinated with my mother's colorful dresses. I do find a well-designed uniform extremely satisfying and I do un-

derstand that uniforms are not incidental embroidery. Like \$800 suits and mink coats, uniforms have a purpose—to indicate that the people who wear them are different from you and me. Imagine this: You arrive at the stadium and find the teams playing in street clothes. Our heroes would be reduced to mere mortals. I submit that the game would lose its luster.

Uniforms have not only an aesthetic dimension, but a moral one. If clothes make the man, shouldn't uniforms make the team? The Yankees, in their unchangingly demure navy-and-white pinstripes, deserve to be good, as do the Celtics in their basic green. Not that simplicity is the highest form of design; the Packers, in their busy but balanced green and gold, *looked* like the winners they were in the 1960s, although one feels that something in olive drab and black would have better suited Vince Lombardi's philosophy.

Unfortunately, the moral universe of uniforms is an imperfect one. Some teams, like the Bears, Colts and Pacers, deserve better on the basis of what they wear. On the other hand, some teams deserve worse. The Pirates would do well to discard their gaudy black-and-gold mix-and-match uniforms and change into something decent, preferably their old sleeveless models. Or take the Astros, whose garish red, orange and yellow multi-striped suits make them look like the condiment tray at a hot dog stand. They should never have been allowed to beat the Dodgers last

year. At least they were put in their place by the Phillies who, incidentally, should never have gone from crimson to maroonish in the mid-1970s. And the script "P" was more attractive than the current version, which resembles an earthworm doing yoga.

How about a team that merits its mediocrity? Try the White Sox. Since the mid-1960s, they've had four uniforms, each different in color scheme and design, and the club is planning new ensembles for next season to replace their much-maligned indigo-and-white garb. The Pale Hose remind me of women who always arrive late because they can't decide what to



wear. Sartorial consistency is to be recommended, although fans of the feckless Cubs, whose home uniforms have barely changed in 30 years, might not readily understand its virtues. Perhaps the Cubs' problem is that they, like 10 other major league teams, have abandoned the once *de rigueur* traveling grays for a shade of robin's egg blue. This hue makes its victims look more like hospital orderlies than professional athletes.

The Robin's Egg Blue Epidemic is just one of the recent flamboyant trends. It's still true that red, blue and yellow—maybe because they're the three primary colors or because two of them happen to be our national colors—are the predominant hues in each of the four major sports. Blue appears most in the NFL, NHL and major leagues (where 19 of 26 teams wear it),

red is not far behind (except in the NBA, where it has a slight lead over blue), and yellow or gold places third.

But with expansion and increased television coverage in the 1960s, sports entered its Expressionist Period. The primary colors were used more extravagantly (reaching an apotheosis in the red, blue and yellow uniforms of the Colorado Rockies), but, more important, previously untried color combinations made the scene. The Phoenix Suns adopted the unthinkable scheme of purple and orange in 1968. The Jazz—first New Orleans, now Utah—dared to wear purple, green and gold to work, while the Milwaukee Bucks donned red and three shades of green. The combination of green and blue suddenly became common: The Vancouver Canucks originally wore it, as did the Oakland Seals of the NHL, the

Portland Storm of the World Football League and the Atlanta Hawks of the early Pete Maravich era; now it's worn by the Hartford Whalers, Seattle Seahawks and Dallas Mavericks. A hint to the owner of the next pro franchise: The only plausible color scheme that hasn't yet been used at the pro level is orange and green, although the Miami Dolphins' aqua and orange comes close. I applauded this experimentation as long as it was done tastefully. However, like children with their first set of tempera paints, some teams didn't know when to stop (see box).

Nowhere has the Technicolor trend been more disturbing than in the NFL. There was a time when most teams wore white pants, except for the Packers and Redskins (gold), the Cardinals (red occasionally), the Lions (silver, beginning in the 1960s) and the 49ers (silver, then gold). Then in the late 1960s, the Vikings broke the color barrier by sporting emetic purple pants and the Cowboys came out in metallic blue. By the late 1970s, teams started changing their road-game pants to the uniform's dominant color. The Browns wear orange britches, the Saints black, the Bills and Oilers blue, and the Redskins a dirty maroon. These teams look as if they expect to win by nauseating the opposition.

Of course, color figures in the psychology of winning. The superstition peaked in last season's NFC championship, when host Philadelphia broke with tradition and wore white to force the Cowboys to wear their blue jerseys, in which the team had a losing record last year. The Eagles won easily. A few days later, Cowboy president Tex Schramm announced he would have the uniforms redesigned for the 1981 season—the blue jerseys are now a deeper blue and the once-metallic-blue pants are now silver—but he denies that the subtle changes were made for psychological reasons.

Many people associate the success of the Raiders and Steelers in the 1970s with black, their dominant color. "When they first come out on the field, they're intimidating," says San Diego tight end Kellen Winslow, "but as the game goes on, the color becomes a lot lighter."

Let's face it—uniforms are a matter of the gravest aesthetic consequence, but neither black nor any other hue can guarantee victory. Consider the Saints. ■

R. D. ROSEN, author of *Psychobabble*, is TV critic for the Boston Phoenix and the Washington Journalism Review.

## Off-color Jokes

### The Best Five

**CHICAGO BEARS:** My childhood in Chicago has nothing to do with my admiration for the Bears' imposing, tasteful uniforms with their classic triple sleeve and sock stripes.

**CINCINNATI BENGALS:** High marks for the attempt to resemble actual tigers. Did you ever see green eagles, Honolulu blue lions or, for that matter, navy blue and burnt orange bears? The era of verisimilitude.

**DETROIT TIGERS (HOME):** Closest thing in the pros to formal wear.

**LOS ANGELES LAKERS:** I wouldn't be caught dead in purple and gold myself. But if you're going to wear it in public—and the Lakers, Los Angeles Kings, Minnesota Vikings and Utah Jazz (with a hint of green besides) do—then the Lakers have the right idea. Extra credit for having drop shadows on numerals.

**NEW YORK RANGERS (HOME):** I've admired their epaulets since I first saw the Hadfield-Ratelle-Gilbert line in the mid-1960s. I

mourned deeply in the late 1970s when the team switched to that ungodly design that looked like a United Airlines ticket counter. Busy, but balanced.

### The Worst Five

**HOUSTON ASTROS (HOME):** First team with artificial turf, first team with entirely artificial uniforms.

**PHILADELPHIA EAGLES:** Their muddy green and pointlessly ornate silver trim always makes me think there's something wrong with my television set.

**VANCOUVER CANUCKS:** The visual equivalent of a singles bar—loud and unsophisticated. Their red, yellow and black uniforms with broad, angling stripes meeting near the sternum make the players look like they're wearing a dickey and three V-neck sweaters.

**WASHINGTON BULLETS AND CAPITALS:** I know it's the nation's capital, but that's no excuse for wrapping the players in flags.

**WASHINGTON REDSKINS:** If Reagan wore a uniform, this would be it.

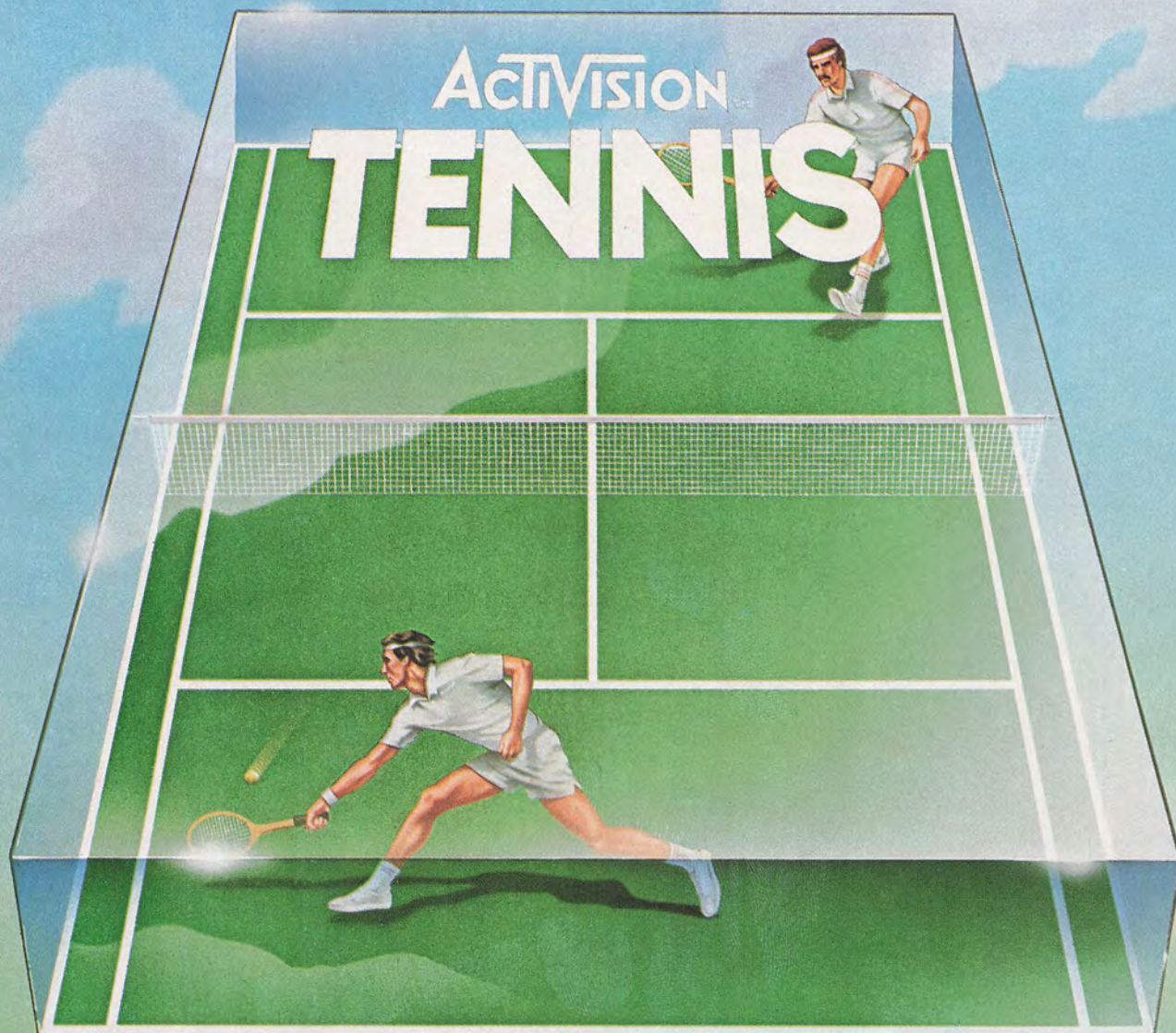
—R. D. R.

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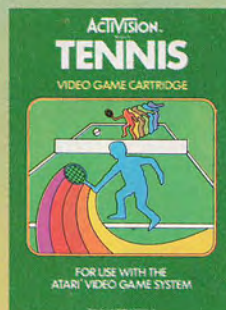
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# THE NFL WON'T BE HAPPY UNTIL EVERY TEAM IS 8-8

*By Pete Axthelm*



**S**OME DAY, WHEN THE HISTORY of the modern National Football League is inscribed on burnished bronze tablets, complete with appropriate X's and O's and Roman numerals, a significant chapter will focus on a single Sunday—the 10th week of the 1981 season. This was the day when the victory of excitement over logic was total.

Three of the 13 games played that afternoon went into overtime. Eight were decided by three points or less. In the more one-sided affairs, two of the losers were Los Angeles and San Diego, supposed powers in the sport. No team typified the bizarre day as much as Detroit. Each time they snapped the football in Washington, the Lions gained an average of 8.6 yards. Their final play was a 48-yard pass completion to the Washington two-yard line. And they lost to the Redskins 33-31.

Call it ridiculous or sublime, artificial or wonderful. Call it a perfect marriage of legislation and luck, with competitive chaos as its offspring. Call it two-hand touch, zebraball, the National Pinball League. Call it Parity, the curse of the betting class.

We've had Parity to kick around for four seasons now, ever since the NFL

altered its rules and rearranged its schedules. The main victims of this strategy—most notably the architects of winning teams, the defensive players and the prognosticators who try to make sense of the game—have had ample chance to weigh in with their complaints and jokes. Cowboy president Tex Schramm once likened Parity scheduling to creeping socialism—perhaps the most damning word that can be uttered in rabidly capitalist NFL circles. Defenders have railed against the pampering and coddling of pass receivers and quarterbacks. And handicappers have seen conventional power ratings—once based on the odd premise that good teams beat bad teams—go the way of the single wing. Parity, its critics agree, is a nasty code word for creeping mediocrity.

But there's a strange punch line at the end of the Parity jokes: Pro football has never looked better. Whatever level of play we're watching, it certainly isn't creeping; it's flying. We're seeing a greater percentage of close matchups. Through 11 weeks of the 1971 season, 43 games involved a double-digit favorite; in 1976, 56 games. This season there were six. Sure, it's a little unfair to force the top teams to

face one another almost every week. But the result is a series of highly entertaining nationally televised games, and it has been reliably reported that television has a lot to do with the sport's success. Certainly when a bad team stumbles over the .500 level by outscoring other have-nots, its fans are being served up an illusion that they are backing a contender. But strip such happy illusions from too many Sundays and Monday nights, and carnivals might make a comeback.

In short, it's time to stop carping and learn to live with Parity. Maybe even to love it. Think of it like nuclear power. It's too late to dig up Einstein and ask him to change the formula, so we might as well figure out how to survive in the nuclear age, perhaps even how to profit from it. It's almost as unlikely that Commissioner Pete Rozelle and the NFL competition committee will swing their equation back toward brutal 17-0 games and grinding, consistent domination by defensive giants. So we all had better adapt and try to prosper.

**T**O DO SO, IT HELPS TO REVIEW the history of the concept. Competition is hardly a new goal in the NFL. Long before the dawn of "Pete's Parity," there was, back in 1948, "Bert's Balance." It was Commissioner Bert Bell who gave sport one of its most enduring bromides when he claimed that on any given Sunday, any team could beat any other. But by the mid-1970s, the quest for the Given Sunday appeared quixotic. For a variety of reasons, the NFL was coming up short of surprises, scoring, even safety features.

The problem was that the smartest coaches had figured out the secrets of winning: defense and ball control. Because pro football is among the most imitative of arts, teams everywhere modeled themselves after the winners.

The results sometimes bordered on the soporific. In the flush of Super Bowl celebrations, hardly anyone minded that Miami's offense was a little dull. But when imitation Dolphins controlled the ball assiduously on their marches to the second division, fans grew impatient. It is one thing to play cautiously and wait for the other team to err when you're Vince Lombardi—but quite another when your team is 3-8. By 1977, teams were scoring less than their counterparts had back in the 1940s. To make matters worse, dominant defenses were sending record numbers of crowd-pleasing, offense-generating quarterbacks to the

sidelines with injuries.

The "cures" for these ailments came in three stages. First, there were the rules. Cornerbacks were denied the right to jostle receivers out of their pass patterns all over the field—and the bump-and-run technique was reduced to a single bump within five yards of the line of scrimmage. Offensive linemen could extend their arms and open their hands when blocking, to keep ferocious rushers away from the oft-injured passers. This made a lot of average passers and receivers braver and bolder and ushered in an era in which hot-handed quarterbacks could overcome even the best defenses.

The second development did not have to be legislated. The managements of weaker teams began catching up to the winners. And the have-nots got a big break in 1977 when labor strife caused the draft to be moved back from February to April or May. Given the added time, the losers could learn almost as much as the top teams already knew about college players. It becomes increasingly unlikely that we will ever again witness the monumental blunders of simon-pure amateur scouts competing with pros: Where have you gone, Rocky Thompson?

Finally, there was the coup de grace—scheduling. "What I like most about the new schedule," says Rozelle, "is that it assures many more attractive television games between the best teams. The fact that it tends to even out teams' records is secondary. And the degree to which it is stacked is often exaggerated. All teams, except the fifth-place clubs in each division, play identical schedules in 12 of the 16 games." The only variance is in the other four games, when the first-place team will play two other division winners and two fourth-place finishers, while the second- and third-place teams face each other. Rozelle also points out that this formula is more equitable than the old blind rotation, which could give a last-place team the league's toughest schedule or a champion a diet of dogs.

That argument may be as sound as the scheduling details are fuzzy. It is not recommended that the fan exert undue energy on debating or comprehending either. Take it on faith: Combined with the other changing factors, Parity scheduling has brought us to the promised day, the Given Sunday. Which brings up the challenge of how to live through it. Here are a few rules:

■ Accept the fact that great, totally dominant teams have gone the way of the dinosaur, and enjoy the converse

situation: Some 20 teams could still be in contention for playoff spots, and one of them could be your favorite. (After 11 weeks, there were 10 teams at 5-6—and all hopeful.) Nobody in San Francisco or Cincinnati is complaining about how easy it has become to go from among the worst to first. While you won't have an odds-on favorite to cheer, at least you won't be saddled with a hopelessly rotten long-shot. (Unless you root for Baltimore. In that case, move on to the next rule.)

■ Instead of denouncing mediocrity, celebrate its attainability. Even the Colts are probably only a few players from mediocrity. And next year that could mean playoff contention.

■ Handicap by situation rather than sheer strength. Does your team prefer artificial turf, bad weather or some other soothing backdrop for its heroics? When teams are generally equal, bet on the guys who are in the mood. Avoid front-runners like New England and San Diego. Under the new rules, it is impossible to count on who will jump into a quick lead. Notice the success of Miami and Dallas, whose defensive backs often plunge them into disastrous situations—only to have them find a way to win.

■ Avoid double-digit favorites at all costs. Under Parity, no team ever deserves to be rated 10 points over another team. Six clubs were "honored" as double-digit choices in the first 11 weeks of 1981. Four failed to cover, and two lost outright.

■ Ignore these and all other rules. The point of Parity is that there are no rules. And that's a situation we can all learn to love. ■

PETE AXTHELM is a Newsweek columnist.



# HERE'S TO THOSE WHO'VE TAUGHT US THE TRUE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS.

In 1843, Charles Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol* to "awaken some loving and forbearing thoughts, never out of season."

The book was an immediate success. And since then it has become as much a part of the holiday season as mistletoe and stockings hung by the fireplace.

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# REACHING FOR

*The Steelers may be getting a little long in the tooth, but they are not going gentle into that good night*

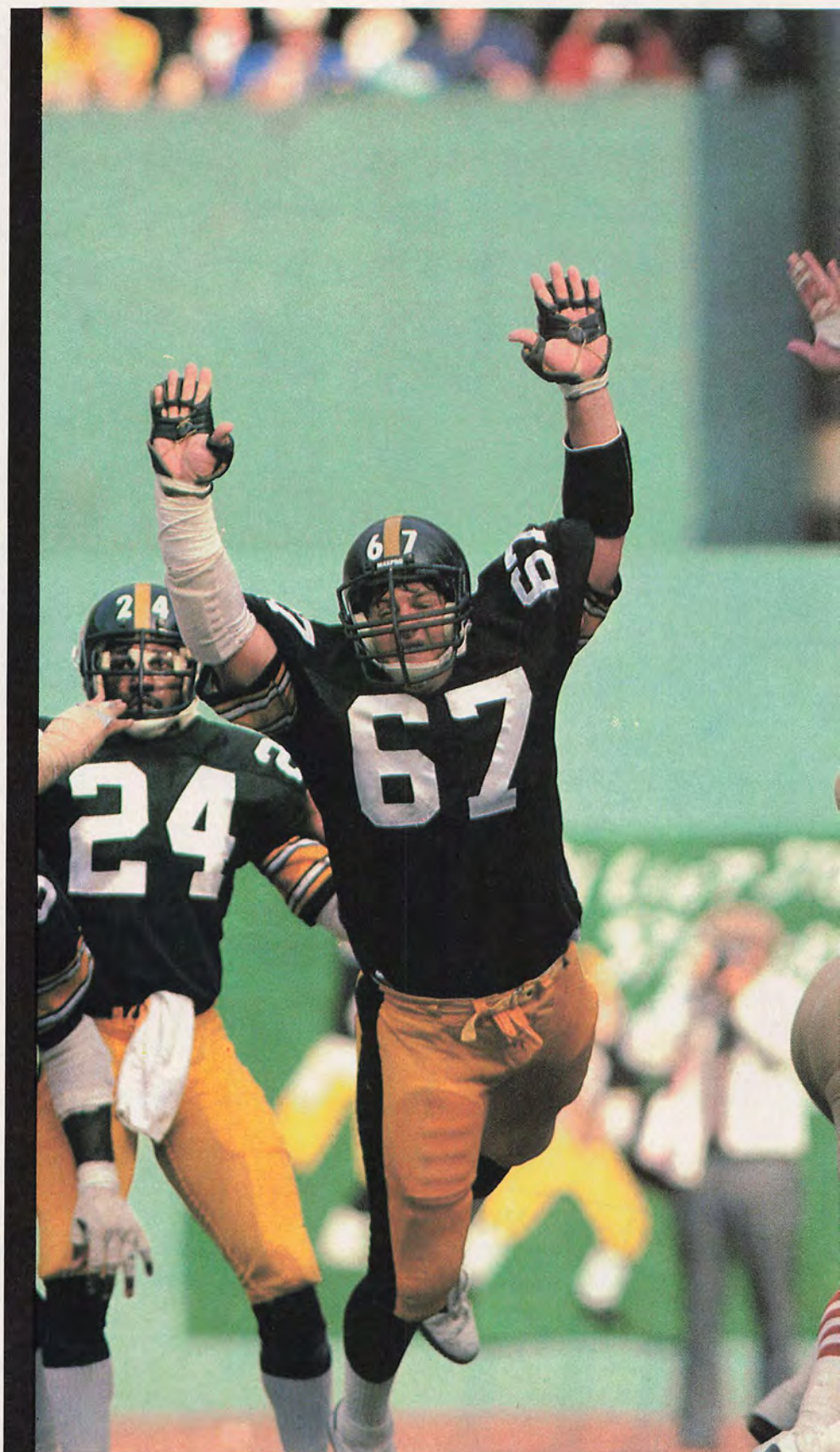
**BY  
PETE AXTHELM**

**H**E WAS THE ROCK ON which they began to build, and he started with the pain of the 1-13 season when he battered people on spirit and hope alone. Now, in his 13th year, he's reaching for more of the same to carry him through what may be his final struggle. In between, there were enough good times for any man. "Collecting Super Bowl rings," says Joe Greene, "is a lot of fun."

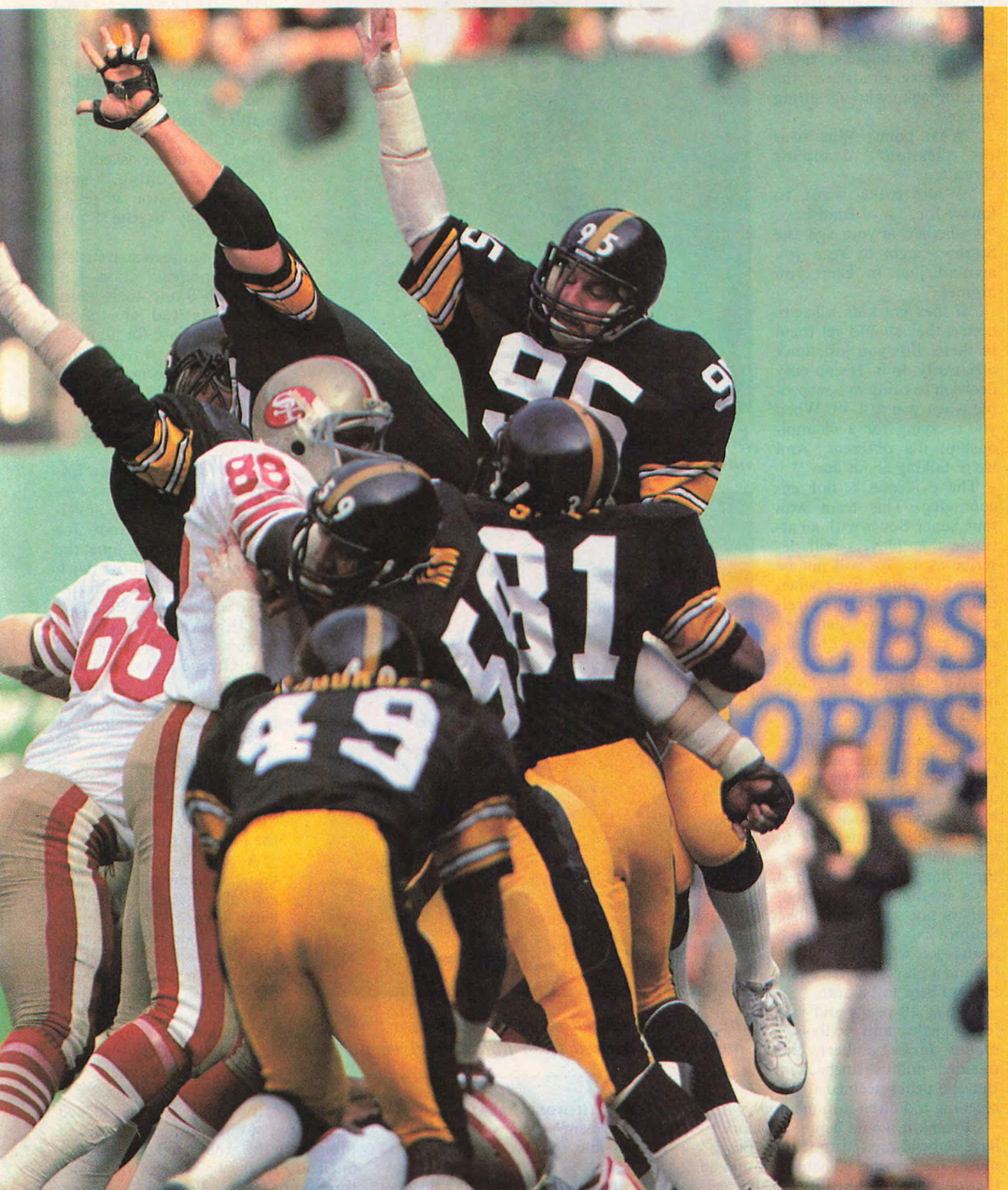
From the start he was Mean Joe, upending blockers and dominating the line of scrimmage as completely as any defender ever has. Even when nagging injuries and double-team blocking negated some of his weapons in the later Super Bowl years, he remained the big brother, the leader, the symbol of the Steeler way. Hardly anyone calls him Mean anymore, probably because of the Coca-Cola commercial with the little kid. Or maybe because he stopped playing that way as his skills slipped a bit.

"You can't just capsule a decade of Pittsburgh Steeler football," says Greene. "We went from the worst to the best. Now we're struggling. Even in our greatest years, there were always highs and lows. But through that stretch from 1972 to 1979, you notice that nobody ever beat us bad. Nobody ever shoved us around."

This year Miami and Cincinnati have shoved the Steelers around. Other young teams—Kansas City, San Francisco, even lowly Seattle—have



# SUNDAYS PAST



*Photograph by Anthony Nester*

shown no awe as they have beaten the proud old champions. The next topic is inevitable. "Do you bring in new people even when the old veterans can still play?" Greene asks. "That's the point."

"That point stinks," interrupts Terry Bradshaw, the quarterback, who is sitting nearby.

"What point? What was the question?" deadpans Greene.

"What folks want to know, Joe," says Bradshaw, "is whether, at your age, the Steelers ought to keep you around just to keep you around."

"If they got kids who are better, they should get them in there. But you just don't arbitrarily do it. It's an easy decision to bring in new people when you're 1-13. When you're vying for a championship, it's different. And we're talking about now."

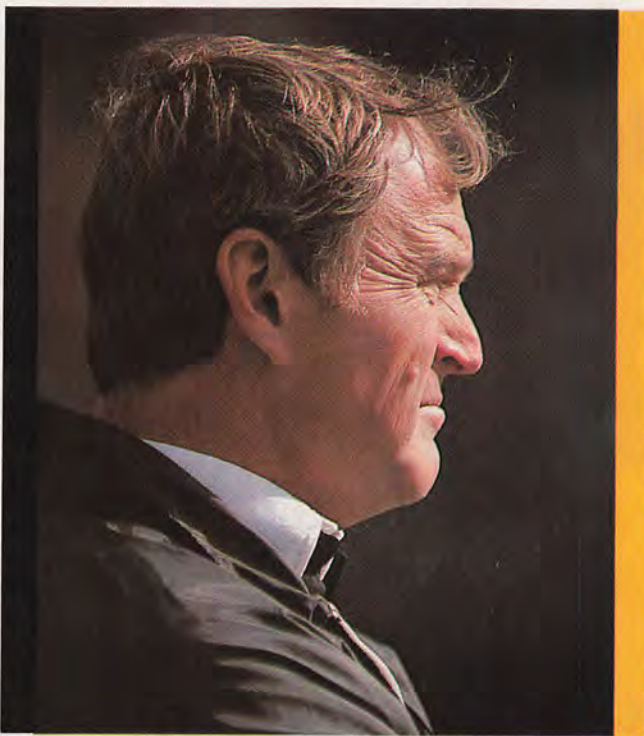
The evidence is not encouraging. This team won four Super Bowls with an attitude that players still describe as a "We will not be denied" feeling. Even when things went badly, the Steelers always knew that they could take charge with bold offensive strikes or big defensive plays. Now the boldness is gone and the big plays are being squandered. In one game, for example, the Steelers intercepted two passes in a row to set up 14 quick points that should have left San Francisco reeling; the 49ers came back to beat them. The next week, they had Seattle crushed 21-3 in the second period. This is not a misprint. The Seahawks, the last-place Seahawks who have *never* been in a playoff game, came back to beat Pittsburgh.

"We're all peaks and valleys, peaks and valleys," moans Jack Lambert, the frenzied middle linebacker. But the peaks seemed to be receding too often into memory.

"I think it would be a great story to have our old men in the Super Bowl," muses Joe Greene. "Then we would be the 'phenomenal old Pittsburgh Steel-



*Steeler receiver Lynn Swann: 'It's harder now to get out of the bed after a game'*



*The Bengals gained more yards than a Chuck Noll-coached team had ever given up*

ers.' Yeah, it would make a hell of a story." Greene's voice drops slightly. "It's possible, too. It's possible."

BACK IN 1974, THE FIRST PITTSBURGH

Super Bowl season, you didn't hear much of the word "possible." Hours before the AFC championship game at the Oakland Coliseum, defensive end L. C. Greenwood was watching the NFC title game on a monitor in a stadium runway. Gene Upshaw and Art Shell, the great Raider offensive linemen, passed by. "What are you doing?" someone asked.

"Just watching," said L. C., "to see who we're going to play in the Super Bowl."

That confidence translated into violent action. Upshaw, Shell and their teammates dented the Steel Curtain defense for all of 21 yards rushing in that game. In the Super Bowl, Minnesota managed 17. The Steelers' dominance was complete. Not just possible, but unavoidable.

And that dominance fostered intimidation. The evening before Joe DeLamielleure was to confront Joe Greene for the first time, the Buffalo guard (now with Cleveland) dined with reserve center Willie Parker, a college teammate of Greene's. Parker related how Greene had once bludgeoned an All-American lineman, ripping the player's facemask off his helmet at one point.

"Joe turned white as a sheet and went up to his room," Parker remembers. "He was up until three in the morning throwing up."

A year later, in a well-known incident toward the end of a game, DeLamielleure learned about Greene. When Buffalo broke its huddle, Greene had his foot on the ball. He said, "I'm going to teach you white boys how to play."

DeLamielleure turned to center Mike Montler. "Is he talking to me or you?"

"Both of us, I think."

The next two plays Greene kicked the hell out of both of them. He kicked Montler in the groin. He kicked DeLamielleure in the lip. It was third and three and DeLamielleure told quarter-

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN D. HANLON; ANTHONY NESTE (TOP LEFT)

back Joe Ferguson, "Throw the ball out of bounds. Please." DeLamielleure remembers thinking, "I just want to get off the field alive."

Times have changed. A year ago, the Steelers went to Buffalo for a big game. "They were trying to take away our position in the playoffs," recalls Greene. "So just like in the old days, we said we were going to show those little kids how the game is supposed to be played." Greene pauses, as if in his commercial. "We went out there and they kicked our ass."

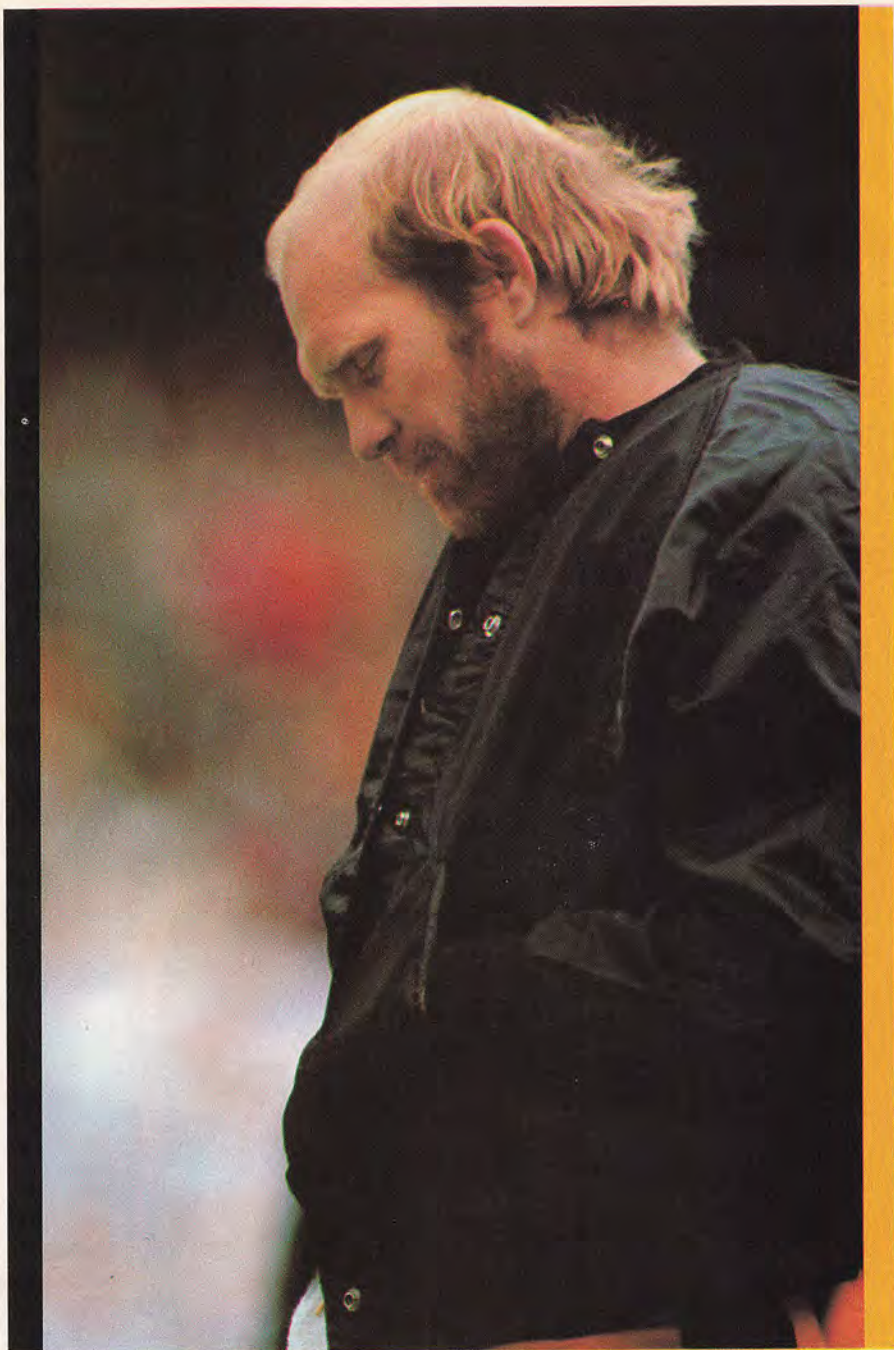
This year's upstarts in the Steelers' division are the Cincinnati Bengals. Like the young Bills of a year before, they kicked the Steelers around. Cincinnati gained more yards than a Chuck Noll-coached Steeler team had ever given up. The final score, 34-7, was an accurate reflection of the competition. "This was supposed to be a showdown," lamented Bradshaw. "Only we didn't show up."

The Bengals were hardly sympathetic. "People used to be intimidated by the Steelers," said nose tackle Wilson Whitley. "Not anymore." Nearby, an offensive lineman shook his head. "You used to look across the line and think, 'Hell, I've got to face Mean Joe.' Now you see a guy in a Coke commercial."

AS THE DYNASTY FADES, EXCUSES are plentiful. They changed the rules and juggled the schedules, bringing weaker teams closer to the good ones like Pittsburgh. They delayed the draft, giving lesser organizations time to catch up with the proven Steeler scouts. There were epidemics of injuries. You want bad luck? Try the Seattle game, when rookie David Trout missed a chip-shot field goal that would have sent the game into overtime.

But no one who has been a part of the Steeler tradition would think of blaming a decline on one nervous kid's mistake. The Steelers are not excuse guys. Never will be.

Even when they speak of the changes that have affected them externally, they often come back to the changes—or lack of them—within. From 80-year-old owner Art Rooney down to the newest players, the Steelers wonder if they have grown too old together. They are trying a tricky balancing act, between tradition and transition, and they haven't quite got it right. "It's the human disease—lack of faith," rumbles Greene. "When you're not effective, you lose a little confidence here and a little confidence



*Bradshaw would face third-and-15—and fire the ball 16 yards*

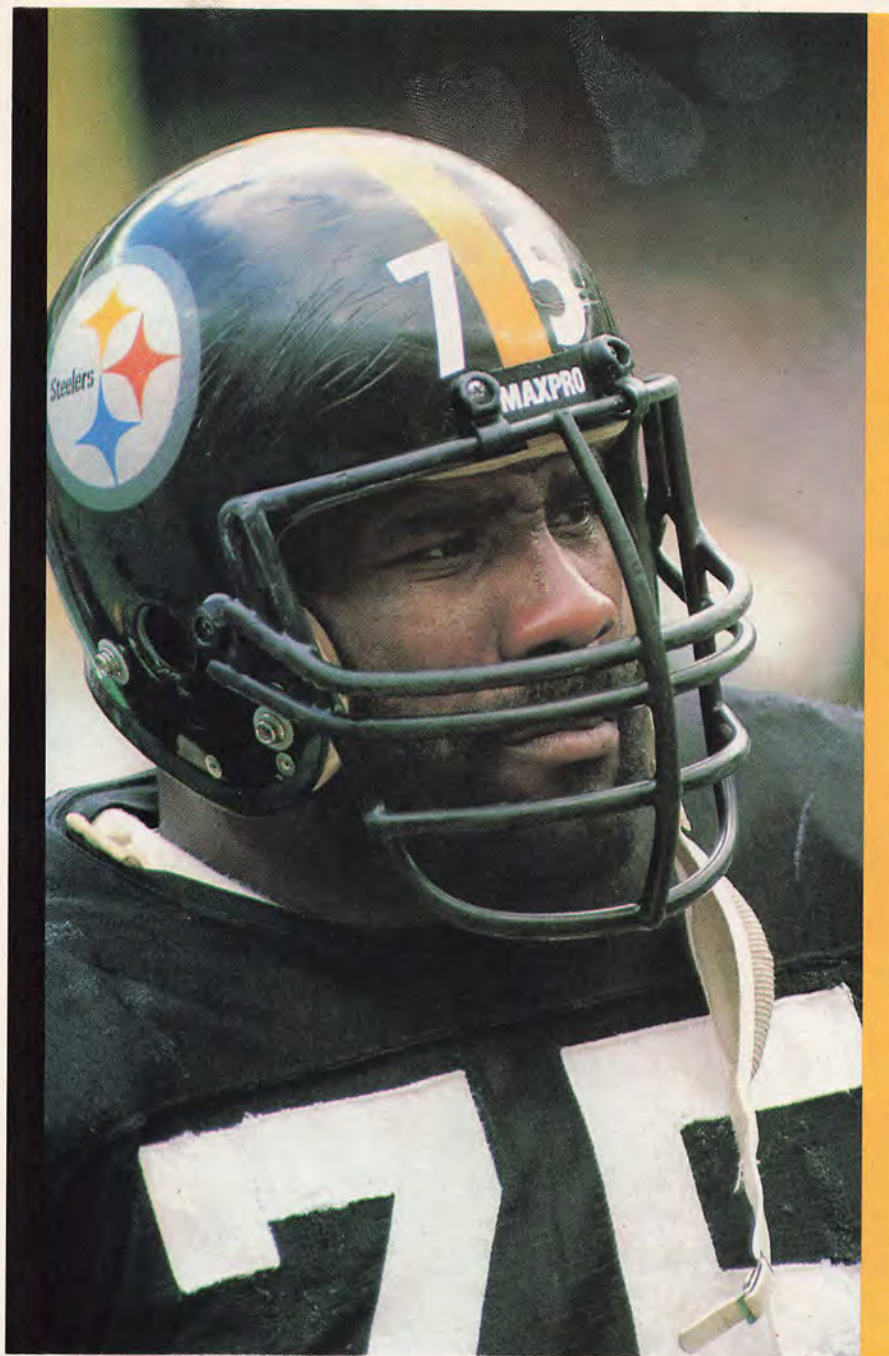
there. Pretty soon, it's all gone."

"When we didn't make the playoffs last year, the town was in a state of shock," says linebacker Jack Ham. "Everywhere we went, we heard, 'What went wrong?' But the answer wasn't that we got lazy and just thought we could throw our helmets out there and win. The answer wasn't luck either. The fact was, we didn't deserve to be in the playoffs."

THERE'S ANOTHER WAY TO LOOK AT the fall of the Steelers. "One of the things that made us win was a certain

loyalty to the players," says Art Rooney Jr., vice-president in charge of personnel for the Steelers and son of owner Art Sr. "You're loyal to them and they're loyal to you and it works out great. But then, who the hell are you to turn around and say, 'Now you're too old to play'? I think the idea of Greek tragedy—what is that word, *hubris*?—applies here: The thing that made you great can be the thing that destroys you."

Much has been written over the decades about the lovability of old Art Rooney. It's all true. Flash back to



*Greene looks back: 'Collecting Super Bowl rings was a lot of fun'*

that Oakland title game in 1974. About an hour after the Steeler victory, Joe Greene came out of the locker room and grabbed the hand of the smiling, cigar-chomping owner waiting patiently in the corridor. "We did it for you, Chief," said Greene. "This one was for the Chief." The other players followed, repeating the sentiments. Rooney laughed and made it poignantly clear that he didn't regret one day of the 42 years he had waited for that championship.

Unlike the neighboring Pirates, the Steelers never needed a disco song to

assert their sense of family. "I've always ducked out of sight when the coaches had to cut somebody," admits the Chief. "Then I'd write the guy and tell him how sorry I was."

Sometimes the Chief doesn't duck out. A journeyman kick returner named Johnnie Dirden remembers one of those times. Dirden was a truck driver whose route took him past the Houston Oilers practice field. He pulled over, talked Bum Phillips into giving him a tryout and got a job. Later he moved on to Kansas City, then to Pittsburgh. He was a marginal

performer, but was surprised to find Rooney visiting him often at his locker. "You better be ready for the cold," the Chief liked to kid him. "Wait till you feel that wind whipping through Three Rivers late in the season."

Dirden didn't make it to late season. On his way to pick up his final paycheck, he bumped into Rooney.

"John, what's wrong?" asked Rooney.

"I was released."

"Oh, I'm sorry." The Chief struggled to smile. "Well, Johnnie," he said in his slow way, "at least you won't have to worry about the wind whipping through the stadium."

Back home in Houston, Dirden cherishes that memory. "Other owners might come see you right after you win a game," he says. "Only Mr. Rooney would take time to cheer you up even when he knew you were gone."

The Steelers have been slow to admit that anyone is gone. They have swallowed hard in recent seasons and retired old Super Bowl heroes like defensive end Dwight White. But their turnover rate remains amazingly low; they began this season with 17 players from their first Super Bowl squad of seven years ago.

Guard Sam Davis is the oldest Steeler at 37. He has been on the injured reserve list for almost two years with a bad knee. This gives him an unusual perspective. "Loyalty is one thing," he says. "Reality is another. There's no doubt that it hurts the Rooneys to see that a guy can't perform anymore. But it shouldn't hurt them if they know that the player has other things to do. That should make them feel good, because they've had a lot to do with helping players make smooth adjustments into other fields."

Davis, who enjoys a good job in sales and marketing, is one of those well-adjusted types. Presumably this makes him one person who has worked out the matter of loyalty and staying around too long. "No, I'm greedy," he admits. "I'd like to go to one more Super Bowl. I'll stay until they cut me."

"But that's disregarding the pride factor," says tackle Jon Kolb, who at 34 will be faced with a retirement decision in the near future. "I'm not sure that I want to go out whipped. Like Sam, I would like to go out after a good year. But then you're going to say, 'I had a good year last year. Maybe I can have another one.'"

The age dilemma has also hindered the club in subtle ways. The Steelers consistently overcame a normal ration

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN D. HANLON; ANTHONY NESTE (BOTTOM RIGHT)

of injuries during their glory years, but casualties became overwhelming last season. While injury cannot be attributed directly to age, age certainly influences recovery time. Receiver Lynn Swann explains: "It's harder to get out of bed after a game. When I was a rookie, I'd finish one game and be ready to play another. Now, it's Tuesday or Wednesday before I start getting over the bruises."

Questions about aging were put to two fairly astute Steeler observers, linebacker Andy Russell and center Ray Mansfield, both of whom retired after the 1976 season. Both work in downtown Pittsburgh, Russell in investments and Mansfield in insurance.

Mansfield: "When Chuck Noll took this job back in 1969, he told the Rooneys that they didn't have any players here. Well, maybe a couple. But he let them know that he would need time to bring in his kind of people. Then he pulled a bus up to the practice field to start carting away the losers."

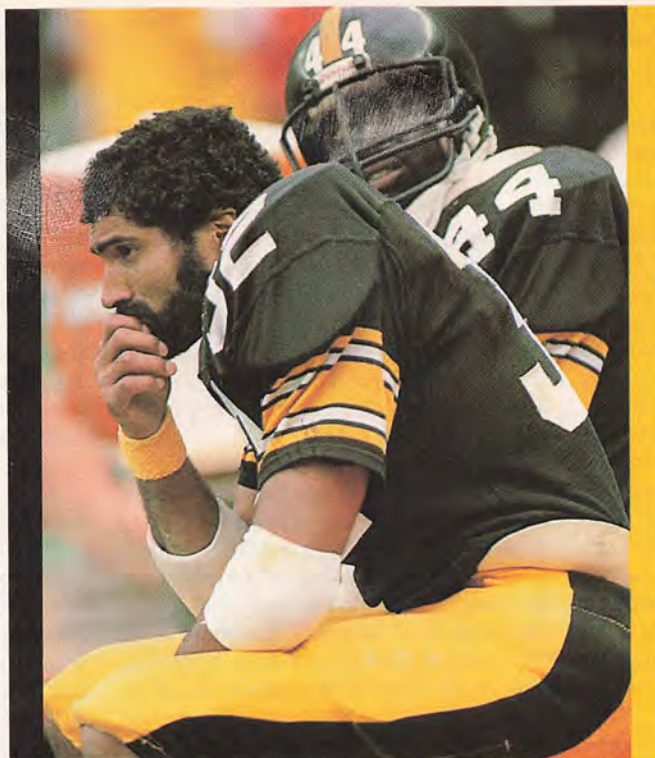
Russell: "We won our first game that year, then lost 13 in a row. But Noll never lost control or respect. He explained, 'We're losing because I'm forcing you to try things that right now we don't have the talent to do. But have patience. We'll get the players to make it work.'"

Mansfield: "So he eventually put together the players. He was patient and they gave it all back to him. A Rocky Bleier would come back from a bad foot injury to run for 1,000 yards. A Dwight White would climb out of a hospital bed to play in a Super Bowl. If people pay that kind of price for you, it must be tough to finally tell guys, 'This is the year you can't do it.'"

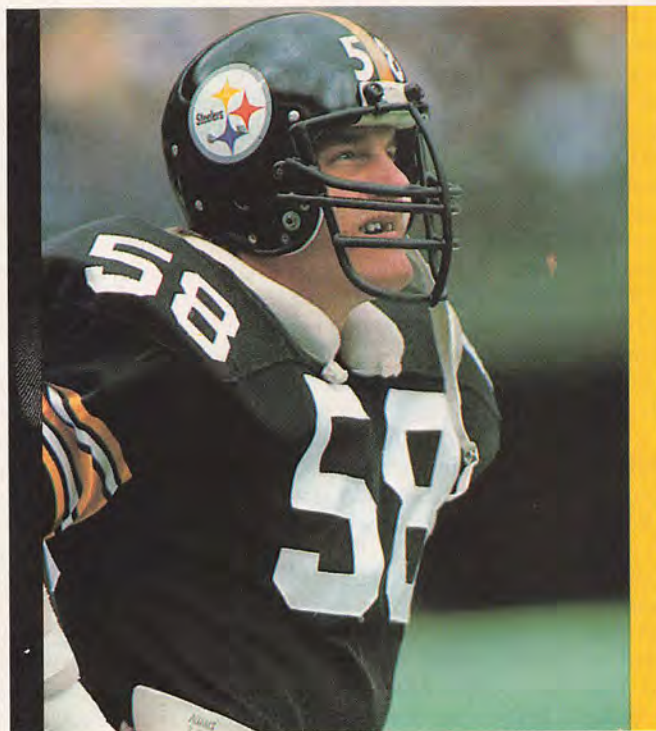
Russell: "The tricky thing about the end of a career is that just when you can't run as fast or jump as high, your ability to mentally play the game is rising to compensate for what you've

lost physically. I only realized it was time to quit when I felt myself thinking about how I might cost the team a game or a trip to the Super Bowl because I couldn't do the job even on one

day almost three years back, when the Houston Oilers challenged Pittsburgh for the AFC championship. The game was over as soon as the sheets of ice began forming on the Fort Duquesne



*Franco (32) went over 10,000 yards, but there was no Italian Army to celebrate*



*Sometimes it seems as if the new NFL rules were aimed at Jack Lambert and his ilk*

play. I started saying to myself, 'I'm afraid he'll keep playing me.'"

There is one harsher assessment of why so few veterans have retired or been cut: The young Steelers have not exactly pushed them to the brink. The Steelers were built in a series of outstanding drafts, climaxed by the 1974 crop that included Lambert, receivers Swann and John Stallworth and center Mike Webster. Since then, the drafts have been disappointing, particularly in the offensive backfield and defensive line. Franco Harris has lost a step at running back—but no one from the draft is gaining on him. On defense, young linemen have flashed only occasional hints that they are suitable replacements for the legends ahead of them.

The Steeler heritage may also work against its draftees. Dwaine Board was one of the last players cut in 1979; it was judged that he wasn't good enough to dislodge any of the resident defensive ends. Board is now a standout pass rusher for the 49ers.

Dwayne Woodruff, probably the club's fastest defensive back, didn't get cut—but he understands the problem. "I came into a camp with guys like Swann and Stallworth, who I'd watched on television just destroy defensive backs. And I was trying to beat out guys like Mel Blount, who I'd watched for years. It was like I was still watching them on TV—but now I was on the screen, too. That can be pretty intimidating."

ONCE THEY WERE THE black-clad masters of intimidation. They did it under all conditions, but connoisseurs of Steeler power recall the bad-weather games particularly. They remember, for example, the gray January

Bridge that leads from downtown to Three Rivers. The Steelers stopped the brilliant rookie Earl Campbell cold and won 34-5.

"It's not that we love the bad weather so much," Bradshaw has said. "It's just that we know it will bother the other guys and it won't affect us."

This year there was one chance to relieve that feeling. The same Oilers came in on a midseason Monday night. The weather came up wet. The Pittsburgh mission once again was to stop Campbell. Only one thing was different: the Steeler defense. Greene didn't play. Nor did Greenwood or John Banaszak, other links with the mighty defenses of the past. Younger guys named Gary Dunn and Bob Kohrs and John Goodman and Tom Beasley manned the line. And in the shimmering glow of the lights through the drizzle, it appeared, at least briefly, that the defense was at last making what Art Rooney Jr. hopefully called "the changing of the guard."

At the same time, the offense flashed an almost-forgotten swagger. During Pittsburgh's early Super Bowl years, the NFL was under conservative siege. The accepted strategy was to avoid errors and grind down rivals. Noll and Bradshaw rejected that. On third down and long, they never resorted to the all-too-common solution of "try-a-screen-or-draw-and-punt." Instead, Bradshaw would confront third and 15—and fire the ball 16 yards to one of his great receivers.

The effect was almost mystical. "Sometimes I feel a psychic force between us," Swann once said. "He'll throw one that looks like it's going to a defensive back, but he knows one of us will get there first. Or I'll fall down, interrupt my timing, scramble—and still know that he's going to hit me in the hands with the ball. It's beautiful."

Going into this year's Houston game, that beauty seemed lost. In fact, Noll was reported to be unhappy with Bradshaw. He wanted him to throw less to his wide receivers and more to his backs. Bradshaw bridled at the suggestion. Noll described the affair as a misunderstanding. Since no one could recall the forceful coach being misunderstood about anything, this was somewhat puzzling.

This was Bradshaw's solution: He hit receiver Jim Smith with a perfect pass in the end zone. Smith dropped it. "Those suckers won't believe I'll call that play again," Bradshaw told Smith. He did and Smith caught the ball. The play was called back by a penalty, but that altered Bradshaw's

plans only slightly. With mock apologies to Smith, he threw to Stallworth for the score. The Steelers won 26-13. That was the way it used to be, when the opponents were the suckers and the Steelers would not be denied.

THERE ONCE WERE SEVERAL COLORFUL fan clubs, the best known being Franco's Italian Army. But last month when Harris became only the third man in history to surpass 10,000 yards rushing, the army was nonexistent. "It got too commercial," explains founder Tony Stagno. "Everybody wanted a piece of Franco's time."

One club endures. Lambert's Lunatics, 25 young steelworkers, have been together for five years now. They come to the games in a trailer with a 12-by-15-foot painting of Lambert on the side. They drink beer and chew barbecue and worship Lambert with the clear-eyed logic of true believers. "We're out here in the rain because we really love the Steelers," explained one. "If people from Cleveland were doing the same thing, it would be because they're too stupid to come in out of the rain."

"This is a crazy world," says another. "About the only thing you can depend on in this day and age is a good Lambert hit on Sunday."

But sometimes you can't even count on that. The Lunatics suspect that the new rules are sometimes aimed right at Lambert and his ilk. When the NFL first took action to protect quarterbacks, it was Lambert who suggested that maybe the quarterback should wear a dress. Lambert has discovered no reason to change his mind. A hit on Brian Sipe was revealing. As Brown coach Sam Rutigliano ran out to the prone Sipe, Lambert shouted, "Sam, Sam, it wasn't a cheap shot."

"I didn't say it was," said Rutigliano. But Lambert got a penalty.

"Faggot football," Joe Greene snorted later. "It's a dumb rule. Hell, a quarterback can have a few beers and he'll get over a little headache."

Looking back, Pittsburgh defensive coordinator Woody Widenhofer holds a special fondness for memories of 1976. The Steelers lost four of their first five that year and the offense was crippled. So the defense took matters in its own massive hands. In their next nine games, the Steelers yielded all of 28 points, 16 of them in a rout when it didn't matter. They pitched five shutouts and won nine straight.

"Even if the front four was as good as it was then," says Widenhofer, "it could never dominate that way under

the new holding rules. And we couldn't shut down receivers under the new no-bumping rules."

"The bump factor is most important," says Greene. "Receivers like Swann and Stallworth excelled even when bumped, but other teams couldn't handle being jammed like that. Cincinnati and Cleveland had nobody who could handle the bump. Now their guys look like stars."

"It's not as much fun to play defense anymore," Lambert says sadly. "A shutout used to be our goal every week. I suppose it still is, but it's really not a very legitimate goal now. It's pretty much unthinkable."

AMONG THE SEASON'S DISASTERS, perhaps none sums up the hard times quite like the Steelers' weekend in Seattle. First Bradshaw, the bold one, actually suggested that Noll might want to call the plays for him. Then the Steelers squandered their big lead. When they fell behind, they searched as usual for the big play. Franco Harris came up with it, an 81-yard sprint with a screen pass. Second-year guard Craig Wolfley had a clear shot at his man. But as the defender was going down, Wolfley's arm got caught in the guy's legs. Holding. The winning touchdown was called back. That set things up for Trout's botched FG.

After the game there were a few suggestions that the struggling Bradshaw be replaced by Cliff Stoudt. That night, the Steelers were grounded in Seattle by fog. Stoudt went to a bar and broke his arm on one of those strength-test games. It was the kind of tragicomic sequence that happens to very bad teams. The Steelers are not that bad yet, but at times the prospects look . . . unthinkable.

"I hope this isn't a decline," said Art Rooney Sr., a week before Pittsburgh came back from the dead with a 34-20 upset of Atlanta behind Bradshaw's five TD passes. "I don't want to get back to that. You know, I root for the Giants and the Bears now. When they first started to lose, I didn't feel bad at all. Figured it would do them good, make them humble. But after a couple of years of that, you start hoping they'll come back."

It is unclear how many rivals will ever muster that kind of sympathy for the Steelers if they continue to decline. But it's certain that the veterans of the Super Bowl years won't want it. They'll walk away, reluctantly, with memories as tangible as their rings: memories of the days when nobody ever shoved them around. ■

# FANCY MEETING YOU GUYS HERE

*By Charlie Leerhsen*

**F**RANK HOWARD COACHED THE Clemson football team from 1940 to '69 and still keeps in touch. So each summer he is asked to predict how the Tigers will do. This year he ventured they'd go 8-3 or 1-10 or 11-0.

Nothing wrong with that. To approach NCAA football with anything resembling certainty these days would be foolhardy, for we live in an age in which Wisconsin beats Michigan to kick off the season and then beats Ohio State, Southern Mississippi ties Alabama, and Minnesota and Hawaii crash the Top 20 in the weekly wire-service polls. Ah, the polls! Remember that nine-week stretch when six differ-

ent schools held the top spot? Never before had more than five teams led the polls in an entire season. And when was the last time Notre Dame had a chance to lose five games? Ah, Notre Dame! This was supposed to be *the* year for the Irish. And, in a way, it was.

On the pages that follow you will find five more signs of the times. All, not long ago, were floundering in college football's version of purgatory. They were 5-6, 2-9, or worse: conference filler. Now they are all winners.

No, not just winners. *Forces*.

A word of caution before you reckon with them. These upstarts may depart the limelight as quickly as they came. Thanks to the NCAA ruling that limits schools to 30 football scholarships a year, and 95 total, the talent is flowing quickly in all directions. The dynasties are becoming dinosaurs.



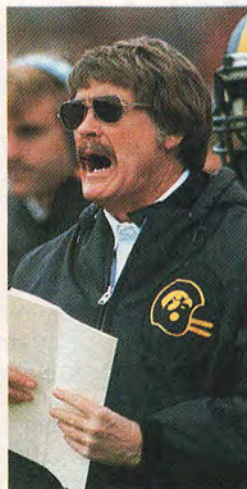
SMU'S JAMES



IOWA ST.'S CRUTCHFIELD



CLEMSON'S TUTTLE



IOWA'S FRY



WASH. ST.'S ELISARA



## SMU

**I**T WAS IN THE SEVENTH game of the 1980 season that SMU football coach Ron Meyer finally summoned the courage to make his offense boring. Out came junior quarterback Mike Ford, a tossing type; in went glue-fingered freshman Lance ("I'm No Preppy, I Just Dress This Way") McIlhenny. Up came the old I-formation, with Craig James and Eric Dickerson (above, left and right) running from the tailback position on alternate series. Down to defeat went Texas,

Texas A&M, Rice and Arkansas.

Still, the season ended with some problems pending. One involved the offensive line, which at some schools *never* graduates, but which at SMU last year was graduating *all at once!* Then there was the pesky NCAA's investigation of alleged recruiting violations. If the Mustangs were put on probation and couldn't play in a bowl game after the '81 season, how would they psyche themselves?

In June, the NCAA found Meyer's staff guilty of, among other things,

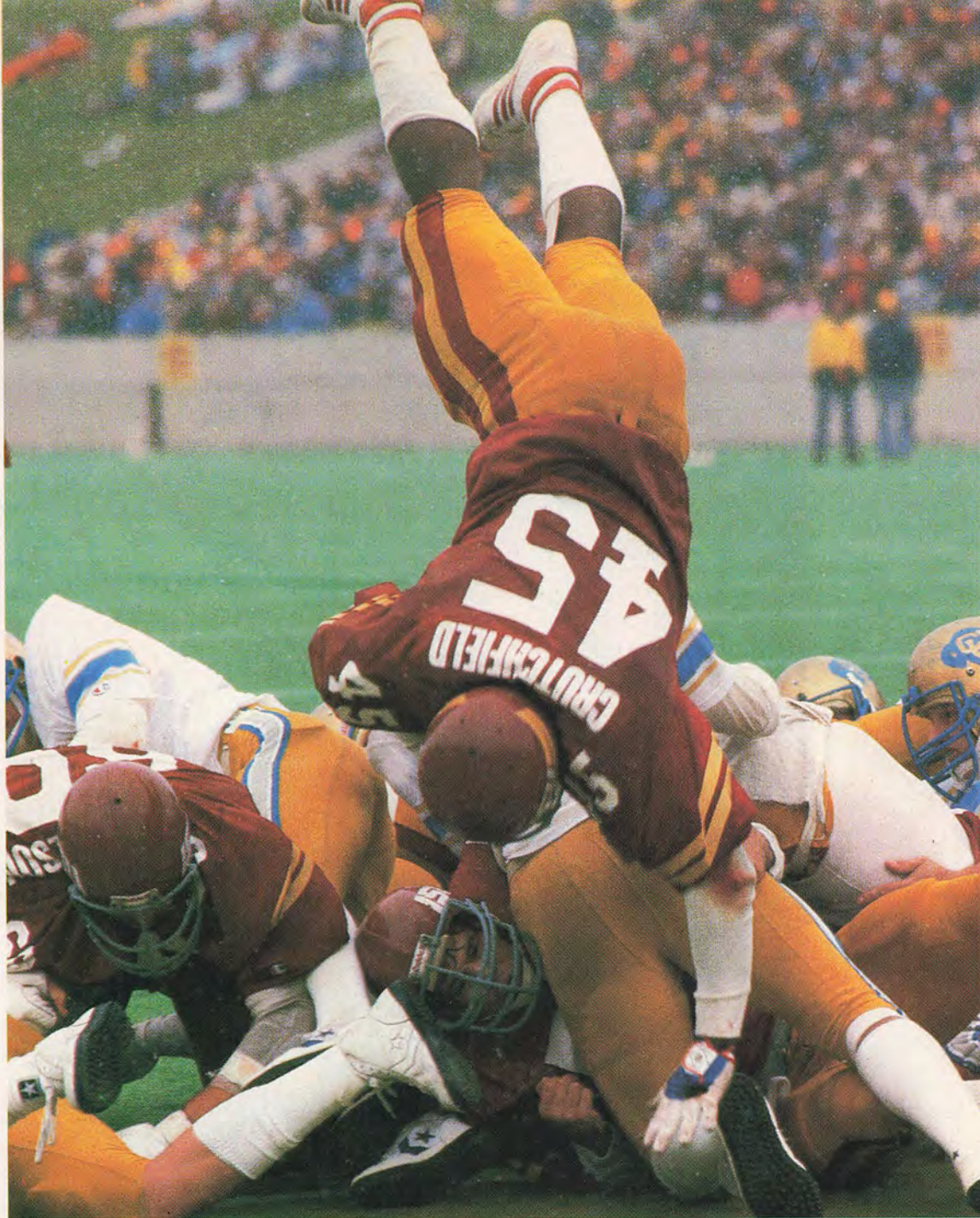
promising prospects that there was money to be made scalping tickets. SMU received its fifth probation, tying for the NCAA lead with Wichita State.

Needless to say, there is a lesson in this for other schools. Unfortunately, the lesson may be that you can get some good recruits the SMU way.

Fresh young players have stepped in and improved the Mustangs to the point where they won nine of their first 10 games—their best start since 1947.

Dickerson-James, meanwhile, the famous two-headed tailback, had nothing but praise for the baby-face offensive line. And why not? When last seen, "it" was averaging more than 200 yards a game.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SHELLY KATZ/BLACK STAR (LEFT); BILL SMITH



## Iowa State

**W**HEN SENIOR RUNNING back Dwayne Crutchfield (above) is healthy, Iowa State plays healthy football. When Crutchfield is injured, Iowa State plays injured football. When Crutchfield is happy, Iowa State is happy.

Finding a fullback who can block for you-know-who has not been easy. Coach Donnie Duncan thought he had a candidate in Ohio State transfer Tony Greene. "But," the coach says, "a 260-pound walk-on tripped and fell

on him in practice and he was injured." The job finally went to junior Jerry Lorenzen, who realized that extraordinary leg strength was a key to keeping up with a man who has carried as many as 47 times a game. Lorenzen prepared himself last summer by pulling his 1971 Chevy Malibu with a rope attached to a tire that he slipped around his waist. "I wanted to do something different in terms of a workout," Lorenzen explains. "But when my mom saw me she thought I might die, so I switched to pulling a

grain wagon on our farm."

The Cyclones this year have become a *team*. You can see it in little ways. For example, when he got nervous last season, flanker Rocky Gillis threw up right in the huddle. This year the talented junior did his regurgitating on the sidelines. The difference? "I didn't hit anybody," says Gillis.

ISU's 3-0-1 start included a 23-12 win over Iowa and a 7-7 tie with Oklahoma—games in which Crutchfield gained 147 and 171 yards respectively. But when the Big C twisted an ankle and his number of carries was cut by two-thirds the next two games, the team lost its spark. As of November 14, the Cyclones were 5-4-1.



## Clemson

**I**T'S NOT OFTEN THAT A TEAM gets its entire starting offense, as well as the second team, to come back intact," Clemson coach Danny Ford noted at the beginning of this season. Since then, something even stranger has occurred: The virtually same bunch of guys that stumbled to a 6-5 record last season has given the school its best start since 1948. As of November 14, the Tigers were 10-0, good for a No. 2 ranking in the polls. No. 1 and the Orange Bowl were distinct possibilities.

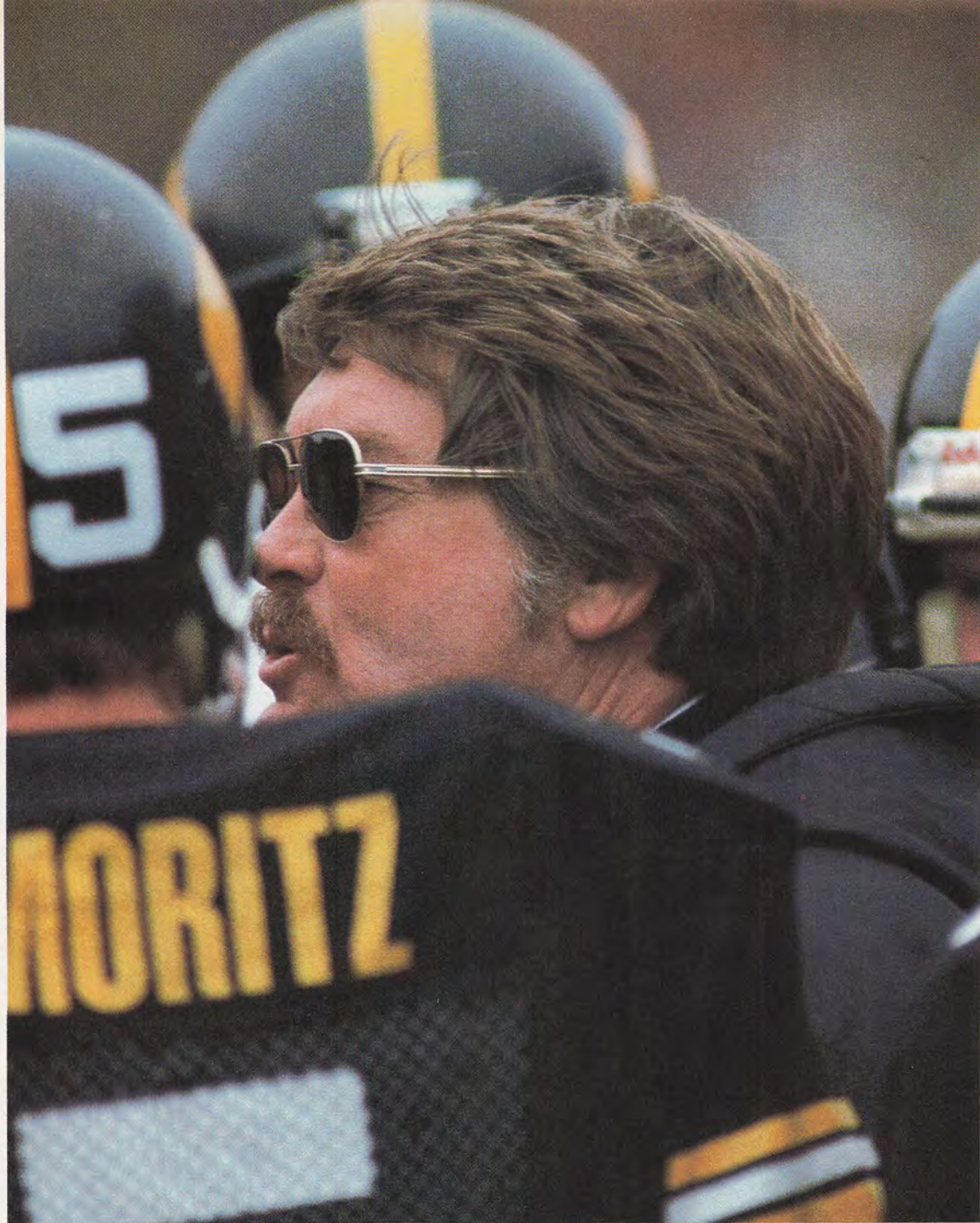
The obvious question is, what happened to allow Clemson to beat such teams as Georgia, North Carolina State, North Carolina, Tulane and Wake Forest by a combined score of 135-47? Unfortunately, Ford proffers the typical coach's answer: "We finally came to play football." This, of course, only raises the question of what it was the boys were doing in all those games at the end of last year.

Let's just say that, once again, practice has made perfect. Certainly,

Homer Jordan, the quarterback who began last year listed as "probably a defensive back," has been getting the ball to senior wide receiver Perry Tuttle (above) with newfound zip. Tuttle broke Jerry Butler's record for yards gained by a receiver and receptions.

No one, however, is cheering the news that Clemson is under scrutiny for possible recruiting violations. The NCAA reportedly is investigating as many as 100 possible infractions, including signing bonuses for recruits. The university, while making no comment, already has retained the law firm that dealt with the NCAA in the recent Pittsburgh and Colorado investigations.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHUCK SOLOMON (LEFT); DAVID WALBERG



## *Iowa*

**T**HEY HAVE A NAME FOR THE latter part of the football season at the University of Iowa—basketball preseason. The Hawkeyes, after all, have not had a winning year in football since 1960. And '61 was the last time they were ranked in a weekly wire-service poll.

Until now.

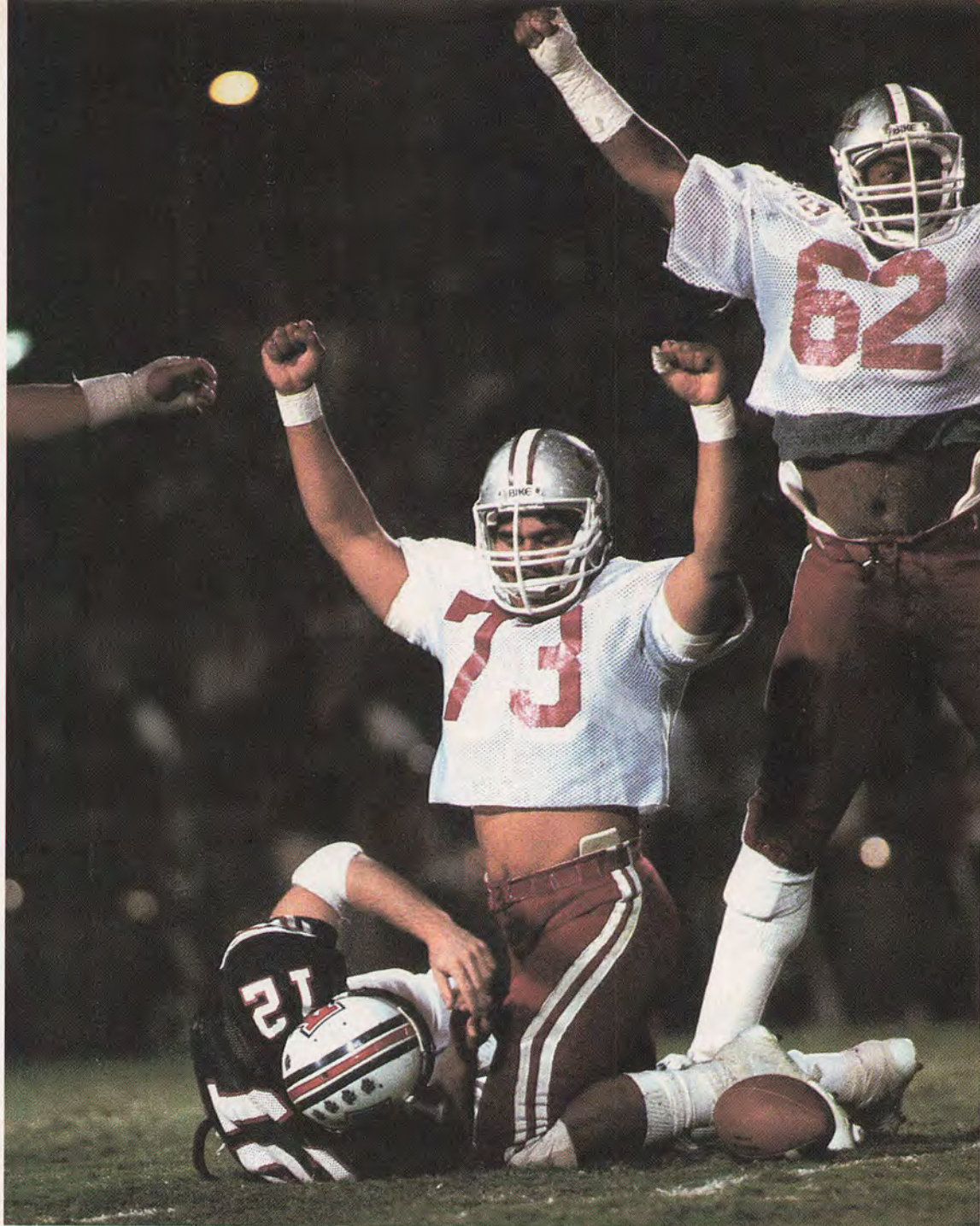
Coach Hayden Fry (above) began his third season at Iowa growing a mustache and upsetting Nebraska 10-7. Then, after stumbling briefly

with a loss to Iowa State, the 19-year veteran rallied his forces to beat UCLA, Northwestern, Indiana and Michigan—at Ann Arbor. Naturally, everyone wants to know if he is surprised by what's going on. "By the speed of it all," he says, "yes."

But speed, as they say, kills. By the time the Hawkeyes reached No. 6 in the rankings there were eight offensive starters sidelined with serious injuries. Playing with third-stringers in some positions, Iowa lost to Minnesota and Illinois on successive Saturdays. Yet a

victory over Purdue on November 7 guaranteed a better-than-.500 season while a victory over Wisconsin the next week revived Rose Bowl dreams.

Fry is known as an offensive specialist who emphasizes the passing game. So it should come as no surprise to learn that Iowa was leading the Big 10 in total defense and scoring defense while trailing everyone in pass attempts. "Hayden likes to keep the opposition guessing by doing things they don't expect," says sports information director George Wine. "With Nebraska, it was the unbalanced line. Against Purdue, we came out in the shotgun—and scored 30 points before they realized what hit them."



## Washington State

**M**ATT ELISARA, THE NOSE guard (above, No. 73), once sang the national anthem before a home game. David Pritchard, a center, performs a Samoan fire dance at various social functions. And Brent White, the linebacker who has no hair, says, "The word 'bald' is like a cuss word to me!" If sportswriters sent out the invitations to bowl games, Washington State University would be able to pick its postseason spots.

But, alas, such decisions are made

by people who believe that good football beats good copy. So the Cougars have been home for the holidays the last 50 years. It is a symptom of just how low spirits had sunk at WSU that the last live Cougar mascot, Butch VI, died in 1978.

This could be the end of an error. "We're in a position now," coach Jim Walden observed after his team got off to a 6-0-1 start, "where we have to play our way *out* of a bowl game instead of playing our way *into* one." The subsequent 41-17 loss to Southern

California may have cost WSU the Rose Bowl. Yet the Sun also rises.

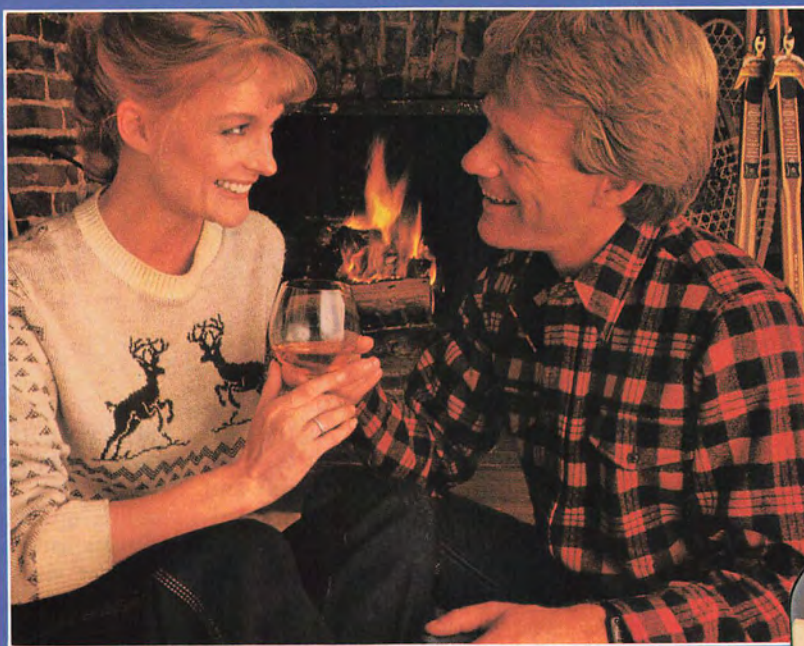
The difference has been the defense. Elisara, born and raised in Pago Pago, is one of three down linemen—the others are Mike Walker and Ken Collins—who accounted for 176 tackles in the first eight games. Assistant coach Bob ("We don't screw 'em up") Padilla has installed a straightforward system known as "Stuff 'em."

Saying you're a football player no longer draws the same reaction on campus as saying you have mono. When the Cougars returned from their Saturday night victory at Arizona, about 200 boosters met their bus. No one seemed to notice it was 4 a.m. ■

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERT HAGEDOHN



SHE: "Looks like we're snowed in."  
HE: "Maybe the rest of the world is just  
snowed out."



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# AIR TO THE THRONE



*Happy days are here again  
for the Vikings, thanks to  
happy-go-lucky Tommy Kramer*

**BY GARY SMITH**

**Y**OU LOOK FOR THE OLD-FASHIONED milk can with the Earl Scheib purple paint job and the Viking head and the yellow plastic flowers blooming out the lid. That's got to be Tommy Kramer's dad's house. You watch the doorway fill with a 68-year-old man with a sergeant's wrists and a Viking T-shirt stretched across a civilian's belly. That's got to be retired Lt. Col. John J. Kramer.

The Colonel takes you on a review of an army of little gold men with footballs cocked next to their right ears or tucked under their shiny arm-pits, deployed on the mantel, the stereo, the end tables. All the frozen soldiers are named Tommy Kramer.

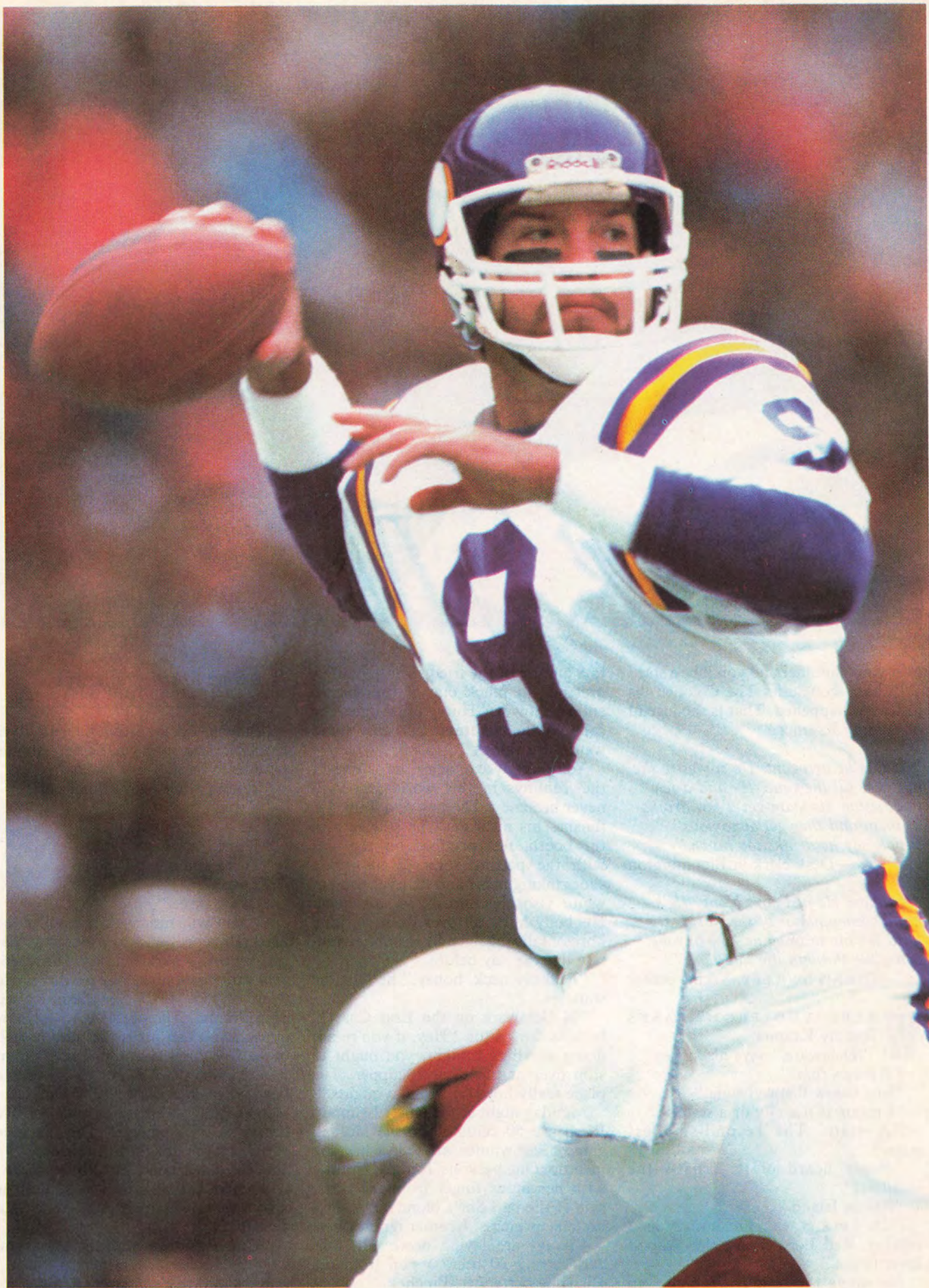
Next come all the plaques, and pictures charting every evolution of the

kid's crewcut. And then The Colonel comes to the poster in the living room.

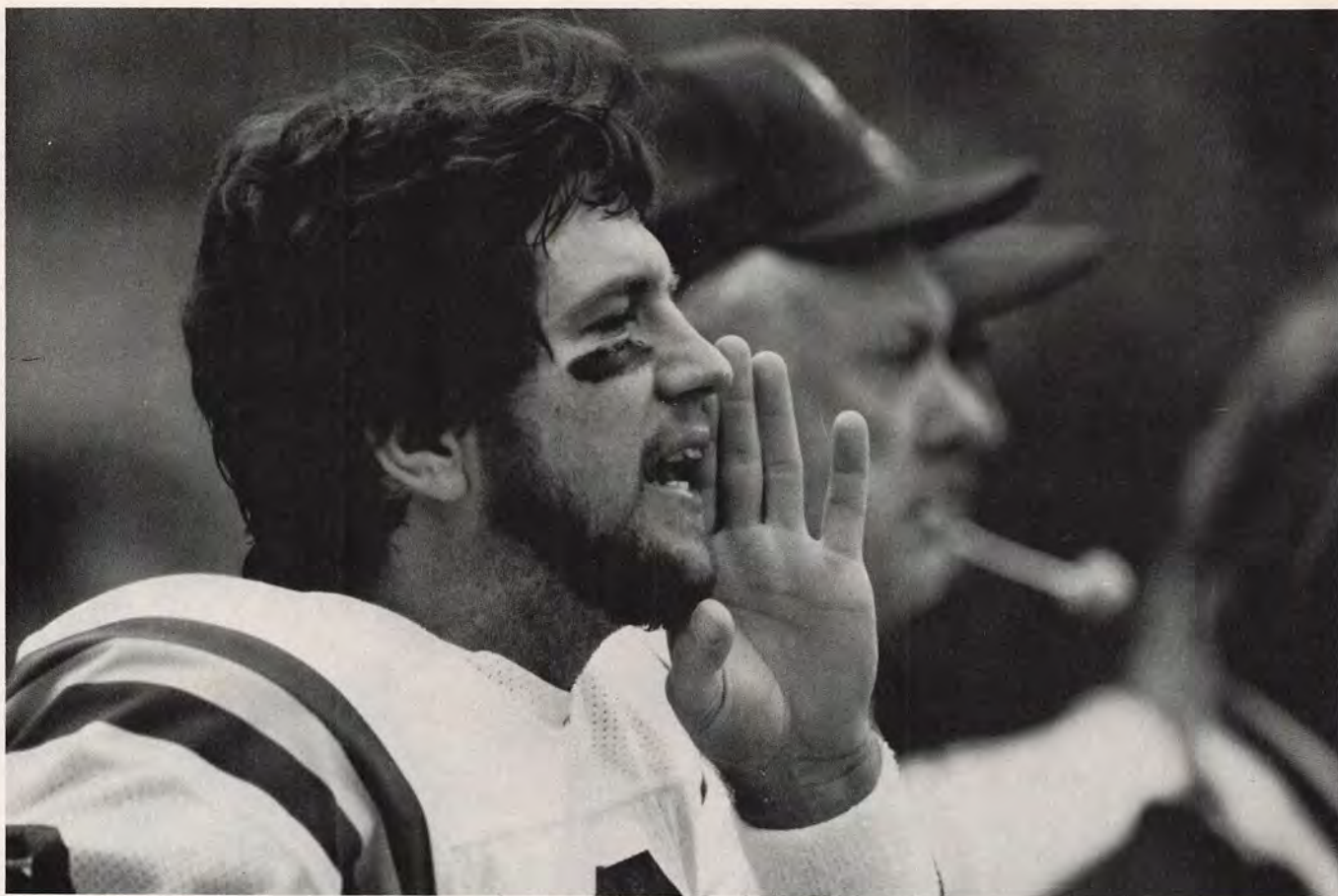
It is of a little boy on one knee, smiling up at a beautiful blonde fairy princess as she taps him on his right shoulder with a magic wand. Above the boy's head, ringed by a circle of stars, is a picture of 26-year-old Tommy Kramer dropping back to pass.

"I had a commercial arts teacher make that for me. Now, look up at it as I tell you this part," orders The Colonel. "In the summer after Tommy's ninth-grade year, I took him aside and taught him all kinds of passing and agility drills.

"And then I said, 'If you have the desire and dedication, then one day Lady Luck may reach out with her magic wand and touch you. Then the mantle of greatness will come down



*Photographs by David Walberg*



over your shoulder and you'll be a star.'

"That," concludes The Colonel, "is just what happened. That is the legend of Tommy Kramer."

*"God, is he arrogant. He comes to the bar here all the time. He and a few buddies on his team get a few drinks in them and they get obnoxious. People say he drinks too much."*

—Desk clerk in Bloomington

*"Kramer? He just bops along. He's not a contemplator of the world. It's hard for me to imagine how anyone can glide through life like that."*

—DENNIS SWILLEY, Viking center

**W**HERE YOU FROM?" ASKS Tommy Kramer.

"Delaware," says his visitor.

"Where's that?"

"Just below Pennsylvania."

"I mean, is it a city or a state?"

"A state. The second-smallest state."

"Never heard of it. What's the smallest?"

"Rhode Island."

"Oh. Let's go eat. I'm hungry as a mother. Red Lobster, for the seafood lover in me."

He enters the restaurant, walks up

to a picture of the fried shrimp platter, pretends to pluck one of the shrimp and swallow it. "Hurry up, Angie," he calls to the waitress. "I can't stand waitin' for things."

You already can sense he is one of the Tommys in this world who will never become a Thomas or a Tom. He finishes his meal and sits sideways in the booth, feet propped on the seat with the peeling soles of his white shoes taking in air and his ever-present white visor backwards on his head. His body hurts all over from working horizontally against St. Louis' defensive line the day before.

"Rub my neck, honey," he tells the waitress.

"Is Delaware on the East Coast?" he asks the visitor. "Hey, if you're not doing anything tonight, you ought to stop over at the Rusty Scupper. The place really hops on Monday nights."

Monday night at the Rusty Scupper. Beers are 50 cents while the football game lasts; women are free while the men do. One beckons Tommy Kramer with her index finger from the other side of the bar. She's blonde, but she's no fairy princess. Kramer ignores her.

Vikings are laying down \$10 bills and getting 20 beers a pop from the Hispanic bartender, Pinche.

## **Kramer: Positive energy**

"Pinche, I'll take the Steelers [over Houston] and give you three," shouts Kramer. "Twenty-five bucks."

"Seven points," says Pinche.

"Three."

"Six."

"Three."

"Three and a half."

"Three."

"Okay, three."

"I also win money in a pool if the first-half scores add to a number that ends in zero," says Kramer. His attention shifts to a silver box on the bar in front of him, a 25-cent game called Split Second. The object is to see how quickly you can press the button each of the five times the light flashes on, at varied intervals. Kramer reacts to one flash in an incredible 88/1000ths of a second. His total reaction time for five flashes is .505 seconds. The machine rates his reflexes *miraculous*, 9/1000ths of a second shy of *impossible*.

Ahmad Rashad strolls in, smooth as a whisper down a perfumed neck. "I'll beat that," he says.

"One hundred dollars says you won't," challenges Kramer.

Rashad doesn't answer. Kramer re-

peats it. Rashad pumps quarters in the box and curses softly. Kramer forgets his two other bets and his beer and parks his eyes right over Rashad's trigger finger. He lets go a yelp, trying to spook his wide receiver into pushing the button before the light blinks.

"Competitive as hell," says linebacker Scott Studwell, who shares a house with Kramer.

Rashad tries five times—his best is .537—and leaves like another whisper. Kramer relaxes and spins on his chair to supervise his other action.

"Lucky as hell, too," says Studwell. "Wish I had some of that boy's luck."

"Miss that field goal, Fritsch, you sonofabitch," Kramer hisses. "Miss it. Pinch! I'll take my \$25 now! Pinch! More beer!"

SOME PEOPLE SAY "I'M BETTER'n all you" just by small choreographies of muscle movement. Watch Kramer quarterback. Watch the tilt of his arms as he trots to the huddle, the chin strap dangling under his stubble, the hands slung on his hips as he studies the sideline for signals, the tug on his purple sweat sleeves as he walks to the center. Watch the insolent flick of the towel up the center's rump before the snap, like a Steinbeck thumbing past a page of Sidney Sheldon. Watch the 1.7-second drop-back—a third of a second quicker than most quarterbacks, according to his former college coach Homer Rice—and then the rattlesnake snap of the right arm. Watch him flick the chin strap free if the pass fails on third down—or chase after the play pointing and clapping if it clicks. Teammates say he sometimes laughs at his own interceptions.

October 18, Minnesota on the Eagle 41, leading 14-9, 38 seconds left in the first half. Kramer's mother, Marie, sits in Metropolitan Stadium tapping her right shoulder furiously. "That's the spot where the magic wand touched," she explains. "The lady sitting next to me thought I was nuts." The Colonel has not accompanied her on this trip. Eleven hundred miles south, in front of a TV in San Antonio, he beats a steady thump on his own right shoulder.

Kramer throws a hocus-pocus pass that ricochets off Eagle nickel back Richard Blackmore's hands and seeks out Joe Senser's for a 31-yard gain. Four plays later, from the one-yard line with four seconds left, the Vikes spit at the run and Kramer whips a touchdown pass that buckles the Eagles. It is his third TD pass of the quarter. There is a rhythm in the Vi-

king two-minute drill that seems to synchronize with Kramer's pulse. His teammates feel it and feed from it.

"He goes in behind a touchdown and he's smiling," says Bear defensive coordinator Buddy Ryan. "He is one of the best."

Against the Eagles, Kramer spurs the Vikings to their second straight upset of a first-place team, fifth straight victory overall, and assumes fifth place in the NFL quarterback ratings. (His team started off 0-2 this year while Kramer was sidelined with a knee injury.) In his third year as a starter he is strafing the league silly, fanning five receivers across his periphery and feeding the free one 54 per cent of the time. There's Ahmad Rashad for the money play, Sammy White for the acrobatic, Joe Senser for the muscle and size, Rickey Young for the first down and Ted Brown for the breakaway. Kramer's precision, touch and instincts place him at the fore of a new NFL offensive philosophy. Not bombs away, but ball control through the pass. He doesn't have a gun, but his arm is strong enough to keep defenses from clenching.

"It's like playing against a two-minute drill the whole game," Eagle linebacker Frank LeMaster says. "Their receivers and backs seem to just run to an area and then there's no set pattern. They get open better than any group I've ever seen; Kramer knows them so well he senses what they'll do."

"He had that from Day One, before he even knew me," says Rashad. "With Tommy, the competition for a wide receiver is over once he beats his man. The ball is going to be there, with just the right touch. God, is it a joy to be a receiver here."

"Kramer's the only person [on the team] really important," Bear safety Gary Fencik says. "Right now the man is a magic quarterback."

Magic? Kramer takes life with the swagger of a man who not only knows he is good, but that his *astrology* is, too. Friends marvel at his luck, at his knack for anything that stretches his competitive instincts on the rack. He excels at games that require touch.

"He walks into a gym," relates college roommate Mark Bockeloh, "and says he can throw a football the length of the court into the basket. First one he throws hits the glass and goes in."

He wins miniature golf tournaments in high school and gives the trophies to friends because of league rules. He finishes third in an NFL foosball tournament competing with a partner he's never met. He leaves poker games with

uncomfortably fat pockets, drops 50-foot putts for double-or-nothing and ugly-angle pool shots for five bucks a ball.

"Maybe it's positive energy," suggests Dennis Swilley. "Things just naturally go his way."

Swelled with this knowledge, the one true thrill for Kramer is testing how hard he can shove good fortune against the wall and seduce her back, how high a crosswire he can take Lady Luck piggyback. He has a compulsion to create competition and rev it with a bet, then to accelerate the stakes higher and higher until he smells smoke and must use everything. He is a mediocre practice passer, a laser in the last two minutes of the half or the game. Seven of his first 39 starts and one relief appearance resulted in victory in the last two minutes or overtime. His high school coaches say that more than a third of the 27 victories engineered his junior and senior years were comebacks in the last three minutes.

"First night I met him," running back Rickey Young says, "he was betting who could chug beers the fastest. He grew his beard [which he shaved after the five-game winning streak was snapped] on a \$100 bet. We were at a party at 1:30 in the morning once and he says, 'Let's go play tennis.' So we're out there playing doubles and he makes a \$200 bet and it starts raining. He says, 'First one who leaves has to pay the bet.' We'll be swimming at a friend's pool and none of us can swim more than one lap, and he wants to bet on who can swim the most laps. He loves to live on the edge."

"We went to Vegas and the first night he's up \$2,700 shooting craps. He had chips falling out of his pockets and he's yelling, and everybody in the casino is around our table. Then he lost every cent of it and we had to walk two miles to our hotel because we couldn't afford a taxi."

His football bets are his smallest and friendliest bets—they go no further than the game that happens to be on TV. He'd rather bet you and beat you himself. And he never places any action with a bookmaker.

"Betting," says Kramer, "keeps me more alert. It makes me want it more. There's no reason to play anything unless I'm going to win. People who just compete for the hell of it shouldn't be playing. It's not fun just to go out and play around at golf unless you have someone to bet. Pressure is an emotional high."

"Lady Luck? When my dad told me that story, I believed him. Things have

always worked out for me before, so I approach everything thinking, 'Why won't they now?' Sure, I believe some people are blessed. There are some people God gives a talent, and they use it to the best."

There is confidence and there is cockiness and then there is cold-blooded conviction. Lt. Col. John J. Kramer, a high school basketball coach in the mid-1960s, remembers being perplexed by a crowd roar during the middle of one of his halftime talks in the locker room.

He emerged to find his 10-year-old son heaving shots from halfcourt ... and swishing them.

**T**HE FIRST TIME TOMMY Kramer ran full-speed into a moving car, he was looking over his shoulder at a dog's bared teeth. The second time, he was following the flight of a ball. "Hit the side both times and didn't get hurt," Kramer says. "Yeah, I have been pretty lucky."

He is asked for other examples, and they encompass the significant moments in his life.

"Well, there was the hurricane when I got my first chance in high school...."

The weathermen called her Fern, and somehow you picture her as a blonde. She came bucking off the Gulf of Mexico and tore into Texas on a September night in 1971. Robert E. Lee High was playing at Alamo Heights, where a three-point stance sent water up to your wrist. Lightning gashed the sky so violently The Colonel cleared his family out of the stands. The ball squirted out of the starting quarterback's hands twice in the first quarter and into the deluge trotted backup Tommy Kramer. He rushed for 113 yards, scored the game's only touchdown, tacked on the extra point, went undefeated in 15 straight games and directed Lee to the Texas state championship. His receivers just happened to be future NFL tight end Richard Osborne and future Atlanta Brave bonus baby Pat Rockett, and Kramer was calling audibles and finding secondary receivers when most high school quarterbacks were running bootlegs. The next year Kramer lost only in the semifinals and was named Texas player of the year.

"... and I was the only one in my family that my father retired in time to work with...."

Kramer was the youngest in a family of 11 children, and all seven of the boys were athletes. Four inherited The Colonel's thirst for command and

were quarterbacks. Tommy anointed himself one in fifth grade—his brothers called him Tom the Bomb. Competition in the family was so fierce that Kramer says the choices were "going into seclusion or fighting back. I wanted to show them all up. Me and Karl would have boxing matches in the living room without any gloves on. One brother would be the timer, another the ref. Hell no, we weren't mad at each other, but we'd get bloody noses and everything. Who won? I did."

"He was always overconfident and he always won, no matter what we played," recalls his sister, Eva. "My brother, Joseph, would cheat him in marbles and Tommy would still beat him. Tommy used to bet pinto beans, and then he started betting pennies."

The children snapped to at the jingle of The Colonel's army belt and the 6 p.m. rumble of his car in the driveway. A medical services administrator, he retired from a career that included coaching high school, college and service football and made Tommy his pet project. Tommy was the only kid on his high school team who had to practice after practice. The Colonel taught him to dart in and out of rows of white socks, to pass from one knee to strengthen his arm, to throw 250 passes a day at a tire hanging in the backyard. He found he threaded it more often when he placed himself in some imaginary bind. "I did the drills half out of fear of my dad and half out of respect," says Tommy.

"... and Homer Rice shows up in time for my senior year at Rice...."

When it came time to choose a college, Kramer spurned the football factories for one reason—Rice passed. He took a terrible beating his first three years. Rice forgot to hire offensive linemen. "But Kramer," says former NFL scout Barry Warner, "just figured getting the crap kicked out of him was part of the esoteric joy of playing quarterback. At the moment of truth, standing there knowing 700 pounds were going to land on him and that he wasn't going to see his pass, he'd stay there and throw it and take it. He'd never bitch."

What the scouts didn't know was that Kramer craved this moment of truth, the last-second high he couldn't get elsewhere on a team usually too far behind for the two-minute drill. But after three years of chuck and duck, scouts rated Kramer a low-round choice or a free agent.

Then the Professor of Pass appeared. Rice hired Rice, and Kramer went straight to the library to check

out Homer's book on pass offense.

Homer had hatched two other first-round quarterbacks, Greg Cook and Rick Norton. He shortened Kramer's stride to increase his power, taught him to start his right foot into his dropback as the ball was being snapped, stuck his studs on the offensive line and showcased Kramer in a quick-rhythm pass offense that accounted for 3,317 aerial yards and a national passing title for Kramer. "Tommy," says Rice, "developed faster in one year than any player I've ever worked with."

"... and then I was drafted by a good team with a great quarterback who was close to retiring...."

Bud Grant watched films of Kramer manipulating defenses and saw Fran Tarkenton's replacement. The Cardinals cooperated by making the kind of decision that can wreck franchises, taking since-waived quarterback Steve Pisarkiewicz 19th in the first round. The Vikes leaped for Kramer on the 27th pick.

"The same things we did with Francis, we could do with Tommy," assesses Grant. "Neither minded throwing to their backs for five yards. Some quarterbacks, guys with the big guns like Namath and Bradshaw, find that distasteful. Tommy can visualize everything, and I'm talking about in finger-snap situations. I can't recall the last time he called a play wrong. He even corrects us coaches. He doesn't spend time cramming—it's a gift."

Tarkenton quit after Kramer's second year, leaving behind a city and an offensive line that did not seem sorry with the change. Kramer did not criticize teammates in the huddle or the media; they rallied around his pure and simple enthusiasm.

And then, in the 15th game of his second year as a starter, trailing Cleveland 23-22 with five seconds left, Kramer lofted a pass 46 yards toward the end zone. It ricocheted off Brown safety Thom Darden's hands and sought out Rashad's, and the Vikings of the Kramer Era were back in the playoffs.

"Yeah," says Tommy Kramer, fiddling with the peeling sole, "I guess I have been pretty lucky."

*"When it's third and 10, you can take the milk drinkers and I'll take the whiskey drinkers every time."*

—MAX MCGEE

**T**HE BEER DELIVERY MAN notices the cockroach first and offers the bottom of his shoe. Eldon

Creech, the tavern owner, says no thank you and goes searching for the insect spray. Kay's in Houston has always had all Tommy Kramer ever asked for in a bar. Foosball, air hockey, miniature bowling and people who care enough to crop-dust their cockroaches rather than track them out the door.

Creech sprays and the roach goes into a death twitch. "The beer here is cold and the women are hot," he drawls. "When Tommy was at Rice, I bet there wasn't a night I didn't see him. Not drunk or anything, just to come in and have a few drinks. The boys used to say he was my son."

Kay's was a small hole in a huge wall called Houston. Kramer couldn't find a hole like it in Minnesota. Singles in Bloomington and Minneapolis all seem to troll four clubs on Route 494, a.k.a. The Strip: the Rusty Scupper, Summerfield's at The Ramada, Eddie Webster's and Maximilian's. The city was too small, the Vikes too big, the clubs too close together not to notice Tommy Kramer. The whispers began.

Kramer was arrested for drunk driving in Houston in January 1980. He says a friend jokingly threw a beer can at Kramer's car to draw his attention in a parking lot, a policeman misunderstood and arrested the friend. Kramer tried to explain to the cop, was ordered not to follow the police car to bail his buddy out and was arrested when he did just that.

He threw 17 interceptions and went 3-5 in the first half last season and the whispers became a din. Radio talk shows became infested by callers who swore they'd seen Kramer wobbling at the Scupper or Summerfield's the night before, and subtle hints hit the newspapers. A cry went up for backup Steve Dils, but then Kramer found the playoffs with a 5-1 tear, throwing just two interceptions, and hey, isn't it nice to see a good-looking bachelor out enjoying women and whiskey?

"If that's all they wanted to talk about, fine," Kramer says. "I didn't give a crap. I knew winning would shut them up. I'm not going to go through life worrying about what people think about me. I've got a life to live. I'm just a down-to-earth person who enjoys having a good time. I'm sure once I get married and have kids I won't be out all the time. I really only go out about two nights a week."

He lightens. "I'm glad the bars close at 1 a.m. here," he says. "If I'd been drafted by New York, I'd be dead or I'd be 60."

Bobby Layne, the prototypical good-time Texas quarterback, has sat

on Kramer's barstool. "Once that reputation gets started it's hard to stop it," Layne says. "You have a beer and this guy tells the next guy and then he tells 10 more and by that time the story is you were drunk at 4 a.m."

"You can keep doing it when you're 22-25, but once you hit 30 you've got to slow down. I made a rule then that midnight Wednesday was the end of everything."

Max McGee owns Maximilian's in Bloomington and does color for the Packers' radio network. When a Packer sacked Kramer last autumn, McGee pleaded, "Don't hurt him—that's my best customer!"

One year later, McGee is found sitting in his club at half past noon, Bloody Mary in one fist, backgammon dice in the other. He surrenders the dice but not the Bloody Mary. "Tommy's my kind of boy," he beams. "I know just what he went through. Me and Paul Hornung used to hang out at a place called The Picadilly. The Packers lost five in a row once before Lombardi came and some guy stuck a petition under every door in town. It said, 'Why pay to see the Packers on Sunday when you can see Hornung and McGee in The Picadilly every Monday?' Then we started winning and nobody said anything."

"You can be lopsided on Wednesday and still do it on Sunday. Whiskey drinkers are the guys that don't worry, the players that are loose. They're more likely to be loose when you need them, at the end of a game."

"I was a lot like Tommy. We had that extra 20 per cent we never used except in dire situations. Coaches like to say they want 100 per cent every play. Guys that do that have nothing left at the end. Actually, you need 40 guys that give 100 per cent all the time and five that save that extra 20 per cent for the end."

Max drained his Bloody Mary and shook his head at the milk drinkers and radio callers who never would understand the crux of his theory: Two-minute warnings aren't any more frightening than last call.

**T**OMMY KRAMER IS SINGING A Country and Western song, driving a Mercedes-Benz and spitting bolts of tobacco juice into an empty beer glass all at once. Somehow, the combination seems to capture his care-free cruise to success. "The main thing is, I don't care about a whole lot. My mom and dad [he has bought them a new house and truck]. Football. Some family and friends."

Anything else? "You'd have to bring it up to me. You should go through life enjoying what you want. The Good Lord has given me health and is letting me do what I want. Why should I get down? I've never had to cope with any real problems."

He has played poor golf this day, rusty from a three-month layoff, but his foursome has won anyway and now he is sipping beer in the country-club bar and divvying up the \$340 pot. Life is as it should be, as it always has been. Uncluttered, uncomplicated, unable to steal the Skool or the C & W off his lips. No pressure, because he enjoys what we would call pressure. No self-doubt, because there has never been the seed for any. No questions, because he has never scratched at the answers. No worry, because he has always been good and the cosmos has always caressed him.

"Sure, people think I'm arrogant," says Tommy Kramer. "I hear it all the time: 'You think you're so good, so cool.'"

"I know once I dedicate my time to something, I'll be good at it. Some people think I'm lackadaisical. If you've never known anything different, if things have always worked out good, why worry about them? It's hard for me to believe that you can't overcome anything. What you can't control, don't worry about."

"I set a goal of being all-pro by age 27 and I think I could do that this year [at 26]. My other goals are to get in the Super Bowl as many times as I can and be financially independent at 30. Yeah, I'm on my way to doing that."

"In college, I was just happy to get my Cs. I don't try to solve world problems. I don't read the front page. Everything is bad there. I just read the sports and comics."

And half the world will always admire a Tommy Kramer and the life with no rain. "It's almost an innocence, like he's never had any problems," says Dennis Swiley. "You can't help but like him."

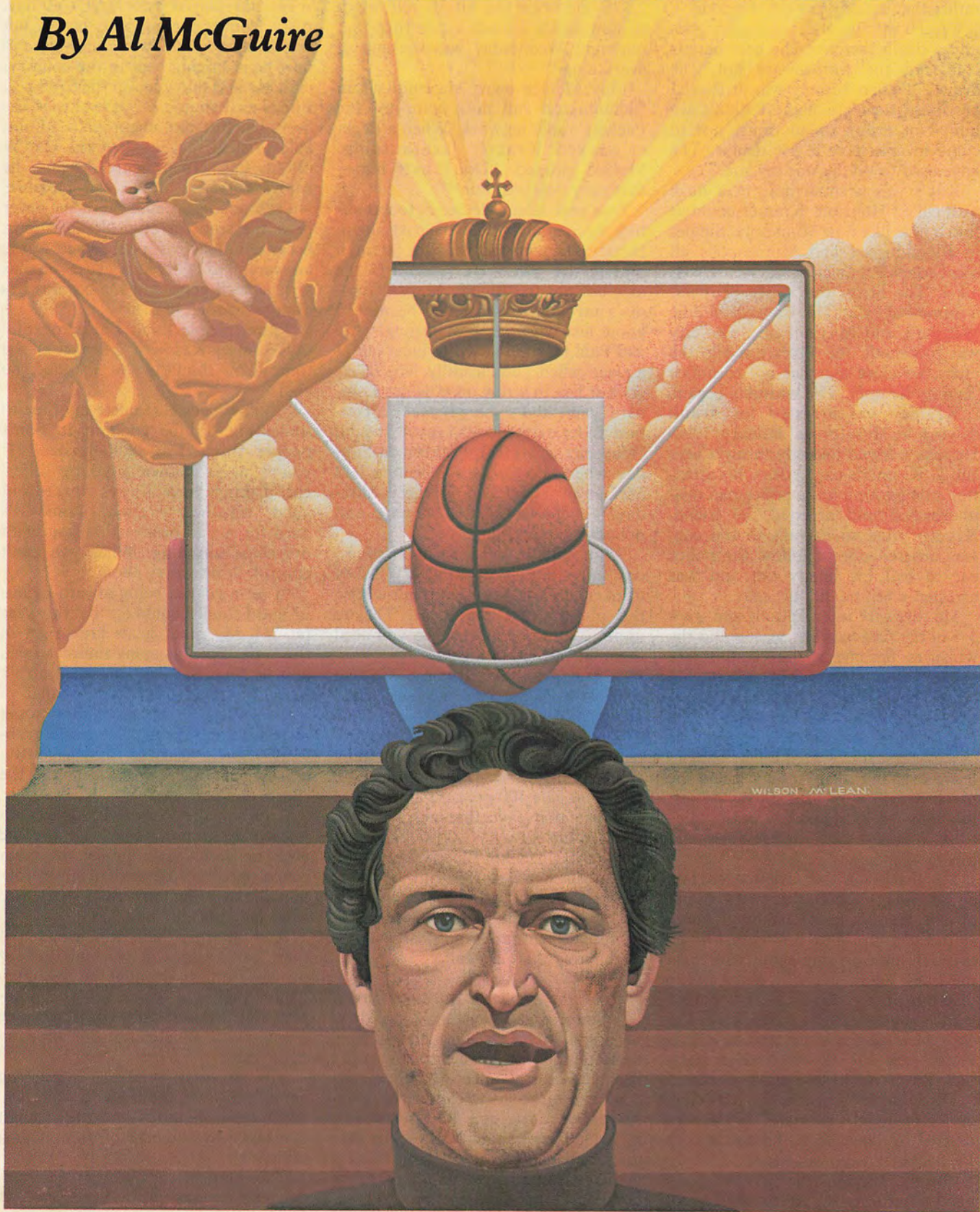
And another half will wonder if there can be growth without rain, or just an endless drought of freshman Friday nights at Kay's and the Scupper and Maximilian's, laying three points with Pinche on the Monday night game.

You are sitting there wondering about the wand and if you'd want it to touch your shoulder, and the thought is cleaved by the clap of mug against table.

"You done?" says Tommy Kramer. "I've got to take one hell of a piss." ■

# HOW TO BUILD A DYNASTY

*By Al McGuire*



*Illustration by Wilson McLean*

**T**HE DYNASTY IS A PLACE where no one is bigger than the program and that's why I never could have coached one. I couldn't get away with my style. I couldn't ice the clock like Dean Smith or be a Neanderthal man. I could have gone to a place like Northwestern and done a shake-and-bake. But I couldn't adjust to an organization that was set in granite. I was more off-the-wall, more of a freebie, more emotional. I wear my sneakers in the office and my shoes in the gym.

But at a dynasty, you must adjust to the program. Kentucky's style would not be acceptable at UCLA, and UCLA's style would not be acceptable at North Carolina. It's like when a guy becomes chef at a great restaurant. He can't make his own gravy. He must make the gravy exactly the way the customers are used to tasting it. That's why I couldn't ever have been a dynasty coach. I have to make my own gravy.

When I coached Marquette, we never quite broke through. Oh, we had a pretty good 10-year dance in which we did a lot of things like the dynasty schools—win 20 games every year and go to the tournaments and have the SRO crowds. The first thing I'd do when I walked out on the floor was look at the top rows of seats in the nosebleed sections. If they were filled, I knew we were doing okay. But, hey, we didn't have what I'd call a dynasty. As good as we were, if I wanted a kid in the state of Wisconsin and the University of Wisconsin wanted him, too, then I'd lose him. It helps tremendously to be THE state school.

When I talk about a dynasty, I don't necessarily mean a dynasty like UCLA had under coach Wooden, where you win the whole thing every year. It's impossible to have it like that again and one of the reasons is the freshman rule. Also, in those days you could stockpile talent; now you can't. During coach Wooden's run, not many schools recruited nationally, maybe 50 or 60. Now there are 200 or more. And back then, the big schools in the South were just beginning to take black players. Today they're not only getting the good black players to stay at home, but they all got the summer camps and the big new arenas.

TV has shown the schools the amount of money they can make from basketball. At Georgia Tech, as bad as they are, you're talking about \$400,000 from TV. Look at how quickly programs were built at places like Jacksonville and Southwestern Louisiana. Of

course, almost any jet job gets you on probation. That's automatic.

I was pleased that Wooden won 10 championships because that way I had to dislike only one guy instead of 10. But that won't happen again. So when I talk about a dynasty today, I'm talking about places where every fifth or sixth year the school is in the Final Four. Places where, if a coach calls, a high school thoroughbred answers the phone. You know, they always have a 20-win season, always are in a postseason tournament. And we're not talking about just the last few years, but they've sustained it over at least 20 years.

The four colleges I think of as dynasties are North Carolina, Kentucky, Indiana and UCLA. Now you might get an argument from some places, like St. John's—where I went to school—and Notre Dame, but the only team that has a legitimate gripe is Louisville. They're always good, they always win 20 games, they always go to a tournament, they've won the whole thing. I like Denny Crum, and hey, they're going to be loaded this year.

So why don't I put them with the other four? Their conference, the Metro, for one thing. A dynasty team must be governing a leading competitive conference. It is the team the whole conference looks forward to playing. When North Carolina plays Clemson, it's like you're in the ring with Joe Louis.

Anyway, the Metro isn't in the same kind of league as the ACC, the SEC, the Big 10 or the Pac-10. The conference recruits a kid a lot of times. If George Raveling out at Washington State is after a kid that UCLA is after, George has to take a long walk and a short beer. That's what got the guy who used to be at Duke. Bill Foster. If Dean Smith wants a kid to come to North Carolina, he's got him. The same is true for Bobby Knight in Indiana.

Maybe Louisville is the exception. I don't know. We can argue about it. The other way they don't measure up as a dynasty is that they're not THE school in their state. That's important. You have to give Denny Crum credit because he's held his own with Kentucky, at least in getting kids from the Louisville area. That's saying something, too, because Kentucky is the biggest and best in the country.

That goes back to Adolph Rupp, of course, and that's what I mean about tradition. They canonize their coaches there and sometimes the coach be-

lieves it. They popularized the half-court zone trap and their offense is sudden, right now. Basketball is a society thing there. The kids start listening to the games on the radio when they're still being burped on their father's shoulder. Kentucky basketball even shrinks the Derby, because the Derby is run only once and basketball is run something like 17 times a year. The players conform to accept the social and academic traditions of the Lexington area.

**A**T NORTH CAROLINA, THE winning tradition started with Frank McGuire, my old coach at St. John's, and the underground railroad to New York City. Frank was brought down there to take on Everett Case at North Carolina State, the man who brought basketball to that part of the country. With Frank, and now with Dean, they never go by a season without bringing in one blue-plate special. They're like a big family and they really consider themselves a cut above everybody else. It's a button-down collar, no blue collar or lunch pail. The only bad thing about the whole organization is Dean's smoking.

Before the new guy at UCLA, Larry Farmer, there was coach Wooden. Farmer played for Wooden. It's interesting UCLA has gone back inside the family. Two of the guys who coached there since Wooden retired, Bartow and Brown, were from outside the family. Now they have a guy who knows how to make the gravy the UCLA way.

UCLA always has well-rounded athletes who are super-coordinated. Everybody out there is super-cool, which drives me crazy. Cool is okay, but super-cool I can't handle. The only thing about the Hollywood scene is that everybody tries so hard to be different, they're the same. You know, a lot of gold chains and wheels. UCLA has no need to leave the state because they can recruit within a bus ride. They made the fullcourt zone press the blitzkrieg of the '60s and '70s. When you think of UCLA, you think of the quiver of the cheerleaders.

Before Bobby at Indiana, there was that guy, what's his name, McCracken. Yeah, Branch McCracken. As for Bobby, there's a quiet fear of him. He creates some of it. When you call, you know Bobby is in, but they have a fear of saying it unless he clears it. Indiana is hard-nosed man-to-man defense, and I think of the salty language he uses.

Bloomington is a solid community with a lot of short sideburns. An apple-pie town, and that's what makes Bobby so strong there. He stands for discipline and honor thy father. No buffalo chips there. The feeling comes from the high school hysteria. Even in a state with two other heavyweights, Purdue and Notre Dame, Bobby has the pick of the litter, unless a kid's father happens to be from Immaculate Conception High.

There's no one thing that makes a dynasty, but here are some of the thousand little things needed to build one.

- You must be a basketball state. It's not possible to have a run in New Mexico or Montana or Maine because the feeder system isn't there.

- You must be the only show in town. The exception is UCLA. They're not taking on *South Pacific* or the pros in Chapel Hill and Lexington and Bloomington. Same thing in football.

- You must learn to work with the media and the student body. All coaches at the top of the game work with them because they're the only people the administration is really afraid of.

- You must have the title of assistant athletic director, or at least have a lot of input into the scheduling. Otherwise, an ambitious athletic director will tag you out before you get momentum.

- You have to play at least 16 games at home or on a neutral court. Ordinarily, you have your own Christmas tournament because that gives you two more home games. And you've got to have at least one excitement trip every year. Kids like that. Dynasty teams usually go to Las Vegas or Hawaii, some place like that, or else they might go overseas after the season. And they also conduct preseason clinics and scrimmages throughout the state to get exposure and maintain contacts with the alumni.

- You must have dictatorial rights in everything to do with basketball. You must be strong enough that when you stand up and say you want something, the administration doesn't throw up roadblocks. When you go to the well, there's got to be some water there.

- You have to form your own army. Work with the women in the area to influence them to get their husbands to buy season tickets. Have a clinic for the high school coaches—not because they can help you, but because they can hurt you. Accept all speaking en-

agements to church and civic groups at first and don't charge anything. After you become successful, then charge.

- You must always have at least three years left on your contract. It's not a shop-around kind of coaching. Dean was an assistant at North Carolina. Joe B. Hall was an assistant at Kentucky. Farmer was an assistant at UCLA before they finally returned inside the family so they can get it back to the golden years.

- There has to be a commitment to a style of offense and defense that is permanent. You don't adjust every year. The great ones might put a doily down, but if you look at the films year after year, you find they do not change. The great coaches that run these things, their priorities are family, ballplayers and school, in that order. The weaker coaches put the school ahead of the ballplayers.

- You must be a good academic school, with a graduate school and professional courses. Successful alumni impress the parents.

- You need a top-flight academic adviser.

- You have to have a highly representative campus that doesn't have severe weather. Bloomington might be the exception. The kids always ask about the weather.

- A dynasty feeds on itself. The coach's summer camps for high school kids are so popular that they're sold out even before the dates are announced. They don't even have to print up brochures. The camps become a feeder system for the university and then, when the kids go into the pros, the exposure that a kid gets by coming from a national power helps. A kid knows if he goes to your school, the pros are going to be there in four years.

- Your booster clubs have to be established and run up to, but not beyond NCAA standards. You want the boosters' expertise and their summer jobs. And you want your kids to have a Big Brother, or maybe a Big Papa and Big Mama, to give them a home away from home. A place to go for Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner, in other words.

- You've got to get on NCAA committees, preferably the TV committee. National TV is a must. You can't maintain a dynasty without prime-time exposure. It's as important as selling out your arena.

- You need to have your own radio or TV show. When you mention the number of radio stations Kentucky

has, it's frightening. They just bomb you out of there with exposure and they get the big advertisers involved. Dynasties do it with button-down shirts. They come at you with Coke ads and General Motors.

- You don't flood in the junior-college area. You think in terms of five-year plans, and there's a tendency to redshirt. Because of your power and size, most of the recruiting is from the high school class. Occasionally, you'll take a transfer student. The taller the kid is, the more you're inclined to grab him.

- You must not have a hangup on phones. You've got to be like Alexander Graham Bell. A sign of a weak program is worrying about the phone bill. It's like a restaurant that worries about the cleaning bill on the tablecloths. If you're a dynasty, the bigger the better.

- You must have a plush office. There has to be an aura about your office. Usually it's more rich in plaques and trophies, but it's also rich in material, the carpeting. There must be something there, an executive feel. And there have to be secretaries. You don't run a dynasty like it's a military school.

It's almost as hard to beat a dynasty as it is to build one. When I played a Kentucky or a North Carolina in the NCAA, I'd go the other route. I'd try to downplay. The kids already were so high and the tickets so scarce. There are no tickets to dynasty games on the road. Ordinarily, parents give their tickets to the kids, but not when the dynasty comes to town.

Anyway, I'd work in reverse. I'd only work to build up enthusiasm for the chippies. Hey, when Bobby Knight or Joe B. Hall or Dean Smith walks on the floor your kids know who the coach is. I'd just tell my kids to not show them our 40-minute track in two minutes, to let the game come to us and not us to it. I believe dynasties win an awful lot of games when they pull their jocks on.

I always liked coaching against the dynasties because they're the best. I could never have coached for one, though. The closest would be Bloomington, because Bobby's teams play more like mine did. But I never could have operated in a situation where the program was bigger than me. I had to make my own gravy. ■

AL MCGUIRE won an NCAA championship at Marquette in 1977. He is presently the aircraft carrier for NBC's college basketball broadcasting team.

# THE TOP 20

By Al McGuire

1

*Kentucky*

MATURITY IS THE THING. THE DYNAMITE recruiting years of '79 and '80 will pay dividends. Led by likely All-American Sam Bowie, who is still improving. They have to get consistency with their shooting against zones. Joe B. might have a problem distributing playing time, but anybody who outlived the legend of Rupp ought to be able to handle that.

**HOW TO GO ALL THE WAY:**

Bowie must be fully recovered from fractured leg, and 6-11 Melvin Turpin must become more consistent. Shooters Dirk Minniefeld and Jim Master must hit over zones.

2

*Louisville*

OUTSTANDING ATHLETES WHO COMPLEMENT each other's ability by the style of play that Cool Hand Luke, which is what I call coach Crum, puts in there. Opponents will have a difficult time making a shot within three feet of the basket because Louisville has flyswatters—the McCray brothers, Charles Jones and Derek Smith—in there. The smartest thing they do is go the full 94 feet the whole game because it creates more playing time and use of players.

**HOW TO GO ALL THE WAY:**

Must negate their opponents' aircraft carrier and distribute playing

time among the best top-to-bottom squad in the entire country.

3

*North Carolina*

THEY HAVE THE CLINIC-LIKE COACHING of Dean and two All-American candidates in James Worthy and Sam Perkins. Have to get more point production out of backcourt. Still, with a top recruit in Michael Jordan, they're odds-on favorite to win the ACC. God did make the sky Carolina blue, you know.

**HOW TO GO ALL THE WAY:**

Find a game-ending pressure shooter to replace Al Wood. Make sure super frosh Jordan is well-schooled by Professor Dean in time for tournament.

4

*UCLA*

FARMER WILL BE A CLONE OF COACH Wooden. Has good rapport with his players and won't overcoach because he waited three coaches to get the job. Might have the deepest backcourt in the country with Rocket Foster, Michael Holton and Ralph Jackson, and they have a keeper in 7-0 freshman Stuart Gray. Might have too many admirals and not enough deckhands.

**HOW TO GO ALL THE WAY:**

Gray must develop as big defender. Got to have creditable players get momentum to sell Back-to-the-Bible movement from a disciple of Wooden.

5

*Wichita State*

COACHED BY THE JONATHAN LIVINGSTON Seagull of coaches, Gene Smithson. The finest pair of bookend forwards in the country in Cliff Livingston and Antoine Carr, but they're going to have to wait for the big freshman center, Greg Dreiling, to come down if the break doesn't develop. One of the soft spots will be the chemistry in moving in new players and the weight of not having modern Top 10 tradition.

**HOW TO GO ALL THE WAY:**

First, must avoid being placed on NCAA probation. If successful, must allow room for forwards to operate and let the play come to Dreiling instead of him coming to the play.

6

*DePaul*

WILL MISS CLYDE BRADSHAW AT guard more than All-American forward Mark Aguirre. Psychologically, might have same problems coming out of the gate that Louisville did last year. Got the Geritol coach in Ray Meyer. Joey Meyer, his son and assistant, will receive his Social Security before he inherits the job. Terry Cummings is possible All-American, a big man with quickness and completely team-oriented. They've been there before, so they understand the heat in the kitchen.

**HOW TO GO ALL THE WAY:**

Understand that Cummings is the star and get by the first round of NCAA.

7

*Minnesota*

IT'S THEIR TURN IN THE BIG 10. RAN- dy Breuer has more than height (7-3)

and coach Jim Dutcher has good record in developing big men. Versatile swingman Trent Tucker gives team flexibility, but lack of rebounding still a problem. They're so zone-oriented they might have a problem catching up if they fall behind. That could be their albatross.

#### HOW TO GO ALL THE WAY:

Breuer must see the ball more. They must cut down on turnovers and make sure players understand their roles.

# 8

## Georgetown

HAVE A STATESMAN, NOT A POLITICIAN, in coach John Thompson. Recruited a potential NBA baseline in Pat Ewing, Anthony Jones and Bill Martin. The 7-0 Ewing could be the second coming of Moses Malone. And Jones is pound-for-pound, shot-for-shot, the best freshman in the country. With them, Georgetown becomes the shining star of the Catholic galaxy. Freshman baseline will have more rejections than the Georgetown Law School.

#### HOW TO GO ALL THE WAY:

Freshmen must not get butterflies and Sleepy Floyd must become a leader as well as a scorer.

# 9

## Virginia

ONE BIG GUY PLAYING WITH SIX guards. Have to change style of play to maintain NCAA appearance. Had the best recruiting year in the country—Sampson stayed. The Kareem of the crop returns. However, Sampson's preseason was hampered by a hip injury. Also, highly regarded 6-8 recruit Jim Miller was slowed by mononucleosis. Still, Virginia has the eraser to take care of many mistakes.

#### HOW TO GO ALL THE WAY:

Sampson must stay free of fouls and injuries, and Craig Robinson must find himself at forward. Need to develop fullcourt zone press and more proven scorers to replace Jeff Lamp and Lee Raker.

# 10

## Iowa

FOUND A TRADITION UNDER COACH Lute Olson. Have a stopper in forward Kevin Boyle, but replacements for the big men they lost must come through. There's enough ability that if the Gophers falter, they'll take the Big 10. Play unit basketball, five people becoming one, and are good at controlling the tempo. Olson is a controlled, tempo coach who's sophisticated on and off the court.

#### HOW TO GO ALL THE WAY:

Frosh must live up to press clippings. Boyle must pick up scoring slack left by graduation and Kenny Arnold must have a dynamite year.

# 11

## Tulsa

THIS GROUP WON THE JUCO NATIONAL championship, then came to Tulsa en masse and won the NIT behind MVP Greg Stewart. Going for the hat trick this season. Excellent coach in Nolan Richardson. Get oil gushes out of the multiple defense led by Paul Pressey at guard. Use a sophisticated system that Richardson learned under Don Haskins at UTEP. Last year an outer-ring team, this year a bull's-eye. Have to be able to handle the teams coming at them.

#### HOW TO GO ALL THE WAY:

Golden Hurricane must learn to ride the wave of success. Soft in one corner. Pressey must recover from shoulder operation.

# 12

## Missouri

STEVE STIPANOVICH IS DUE. THIS will be the season he shows his true potential and develops into one of the nation's premier big men. All-confer-

ence forward Ricky Frazier gives them good scoring up front and they also have sixth-man Mark Dressler back, which will have the Tiger purring again. Sound man-to-man defense will be explosive, but they have to be careful they're not a half-step slow. Should run away in the Big Eight.

#### HOW TO GO ALL THE WAY:

End off-the-court theatrics. Stipanovich must play to his potential and Dressler must return to 100 per cent.

# 13

## Georgia

GOT THE HERSCHEL WALKER OF THE hardcourt in Dominique Wilkins. Can relax because he did not go to the NBA. Still lacking the Chamberlain type of center, but have quick-on-quick depth. Look for 6-5 soph Vern Fleming to control the ball more as point guard and watch out for 5-6 sparkplug Darryl Leonard coming off the bench. Hugh Durham will not take a backseat to the Wildcats or anybody else in the SEC. He's a tough practice coach and he makes high school All-Americans conform and play, which is no easy task.

#### HOW TO GO ALL THE WAY:

Must neutralize opponents' centers and must handle leads with more authority. Must overcome lack of legitimate post play.

# 14

## Wake Forest

BILLY PACKER WILL HAVE HIS moment of glory if they get the pink elephant, graduated guard Frank Johnson, out of their minds. Have two first-round draft choices starting in 6-11 center Jim Johnstone and 6-7 forward Alvis Rogers. No glaring weakness, with tremendous array of good scorers and role players. Relatively soft schedule.

#### HOW TO GO ALL THE WAY:

With four seniors starting, this is the season for them or not until next decade. Have the ammunition if they can replace the irreplaceable Johnson.

# "It's stronger than my headache."

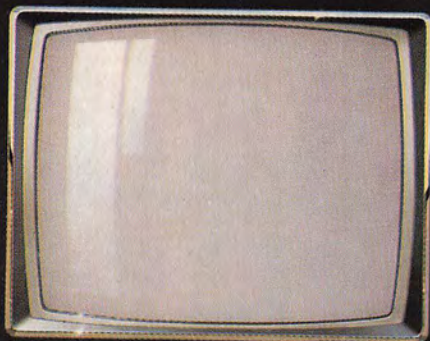
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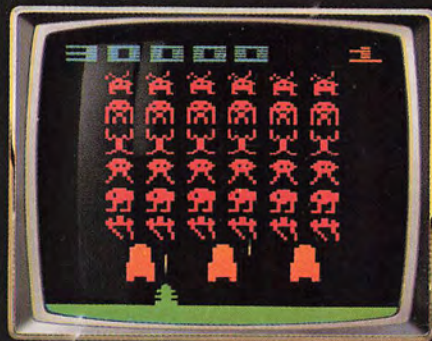
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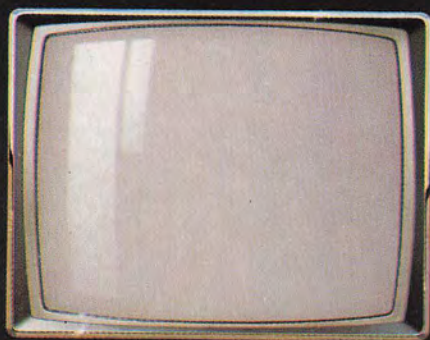
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ALL OTHERS



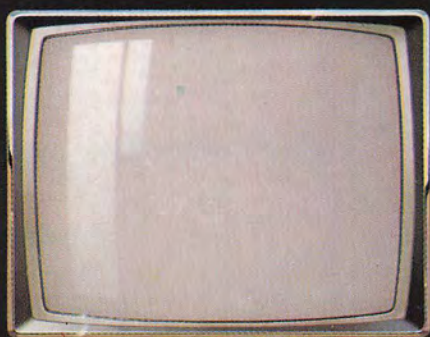
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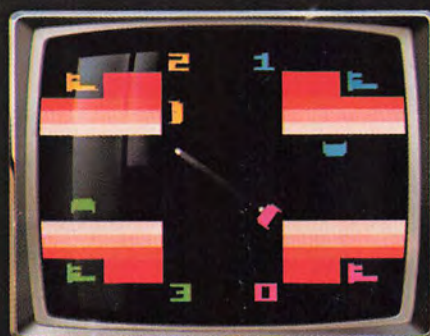
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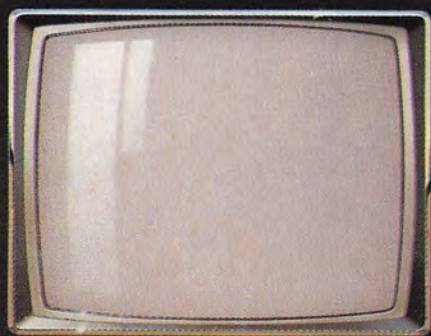
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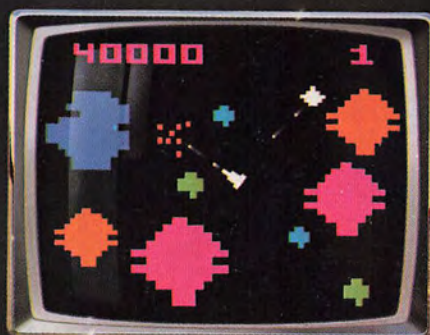
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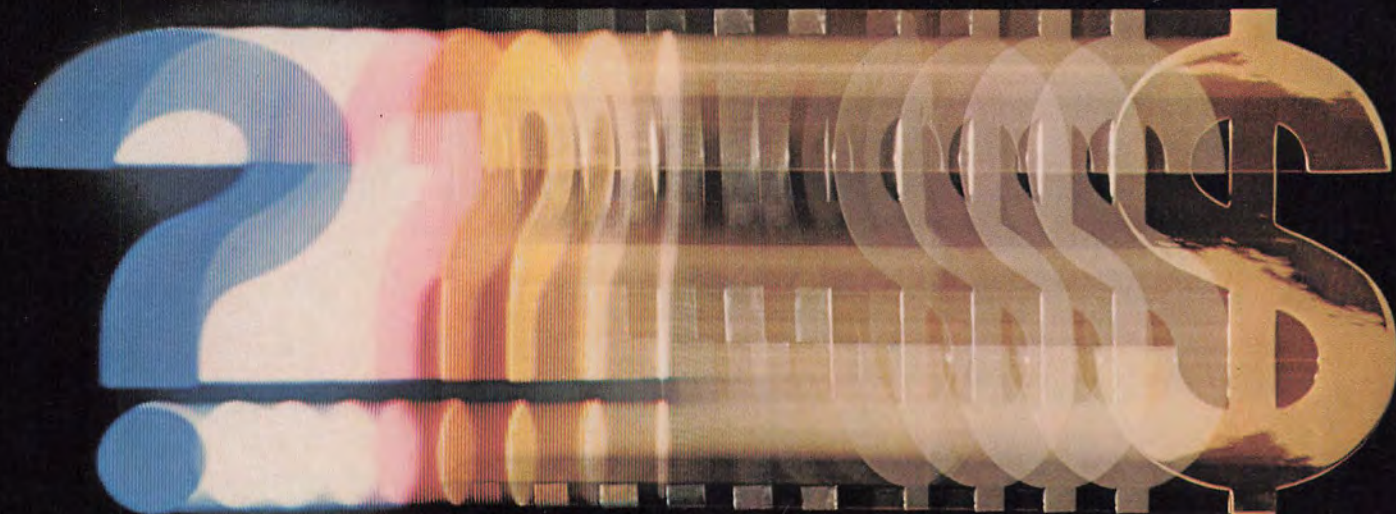
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## The knowledge business



15

## Alabama-Birmingham

CLEAN GENE WILL BE ABLE TO LOOK Bruin fans in the eye. Bartow's proven that he's one of the top 10 coaches in the country, building this program overnight after leaving UCLA. Win over Kentucky in the NCAA leap-frogged them from an also-ran to a stakes horse. Guard Oliver Robinson might get to show his stuff in the Superdome in March.

### HOW TO GO ALL THE WAY:

Be aware that they can't sneak up on anyone. Find someone to direct the attack.

16

## Arkansas

BEAT LOUISVILLE IN NCAA TOURNAMENT on Hail Mary, but won't need "Unbelievable Shot" Reed to be in the NCAA. Coach Eddie Sutton's a proven gladiator who has started a little dynasty in Hog Heaven. They will go the way 6-10 Scott Hastings goes. Should beat Houston and Texas for the Southwest Conference title.

### HOW TO GO ALL THE WAY:

Need more out of forward position to complement Hastings. Need to establish superiority over Houston going into NCAA tournament.

17

## Connecticut

NOW OR NEVER FOR THIS TEAM. Corny Thompson is back and they're going to go head-to-head with Georgetown in the Big East. Going to be very good—if the guards improve. Last year they quit after an 11-0 start, so they have to maintain their interest and stamina.

### HOW TO GO ALL THE WAY:

Get the ball down low to 6-11

Chuck Aleksinas. Exercise poise and patience in pressure situations.

18

## Nevada-Las Vegas

TARK THE SHARK TAKES ON THE SENSITIVE situation of coaching his son, Danny. This can be tough. Sidney Green, with maturity, will be one of the best big men in the country. He'll be wheelin' and dealin'. A couple of 6-9 JUCO transfers will give Tarkanian plenty of size and depth. He's also high on 6-5 frosh guard Dwayne Poole, player of the year in L.A. last year.

### HOW TO GO ALL THE WAY:

Must play more of the 1-2-2 zone the Tark was successful with at Long Beach State. Make sure JC transfer Richie Adams fits in quickly.

19

## Indiana

MUST OVERCOME THE SADNESS WE all feel for Landon Turner, paralyzed in an auto accident. Knight will have to call on all his genius to fill in for two vital spots he didn't expect—Turner and Isaiah Thomas, even though Jim Thomas is plenty solid. It will be difficult for Bobby to make his late run and turn on his afterburner.

### HOW TO GO ALL THE WAY:

Freshmen John Flowers and Uwe Blab must come quicker than expected because of Turner's injury and Thomas going hardship.

20

## Brigham Young

FASTBREAKING TEAM THAT LIKES A physical style of play. They lack publicity because of the lack of population in Utah. Coach Frank Arnold is another Wooden clone. Without Danny Ainge, he will depend on bulk in form

of 6-10 Fred Roberts, 6-8 Steve Trumbo and 6-11 Greg Kite. Like to play an upbeat game. The Tabernacle Choir could be singing on Basin Street. Abundance of power players, bodies by Fisher. Excellent shooters. Weakness is their predictability and lack of clutch player to replace Ainge.

### HOW TO GO ALL THE WAY:

Must add some quickness to go with the size. Need stability and consistency in the backcourt.

## Five on the Doorstep

ALABAMA—They'll win the battle of the boards and their backcourt is especially deep with the addition of Ennis Whatley.

CALIFORNIA-IRVINE—When you say Kevin Magee, you've said it all. Good combination of transfers and freshmen assures Anteaters a shot at New Orleans.

HOUSTON—The best-kept secret since who shot J. R. is Rob Williams. A seasoned cast of veterans.

SAN FRANCISCO—Have a space-eater in Wallace Bryant and a pro-oriented backcourt led by "Automatic" Quintin Dailey.

VILLANOVA—Mr. Muscle, John Pinone, should control the paint. Coached by a thoroughbred (Rollie Massimino) and have freshman sleeper sensation in Eddie Pinckney.

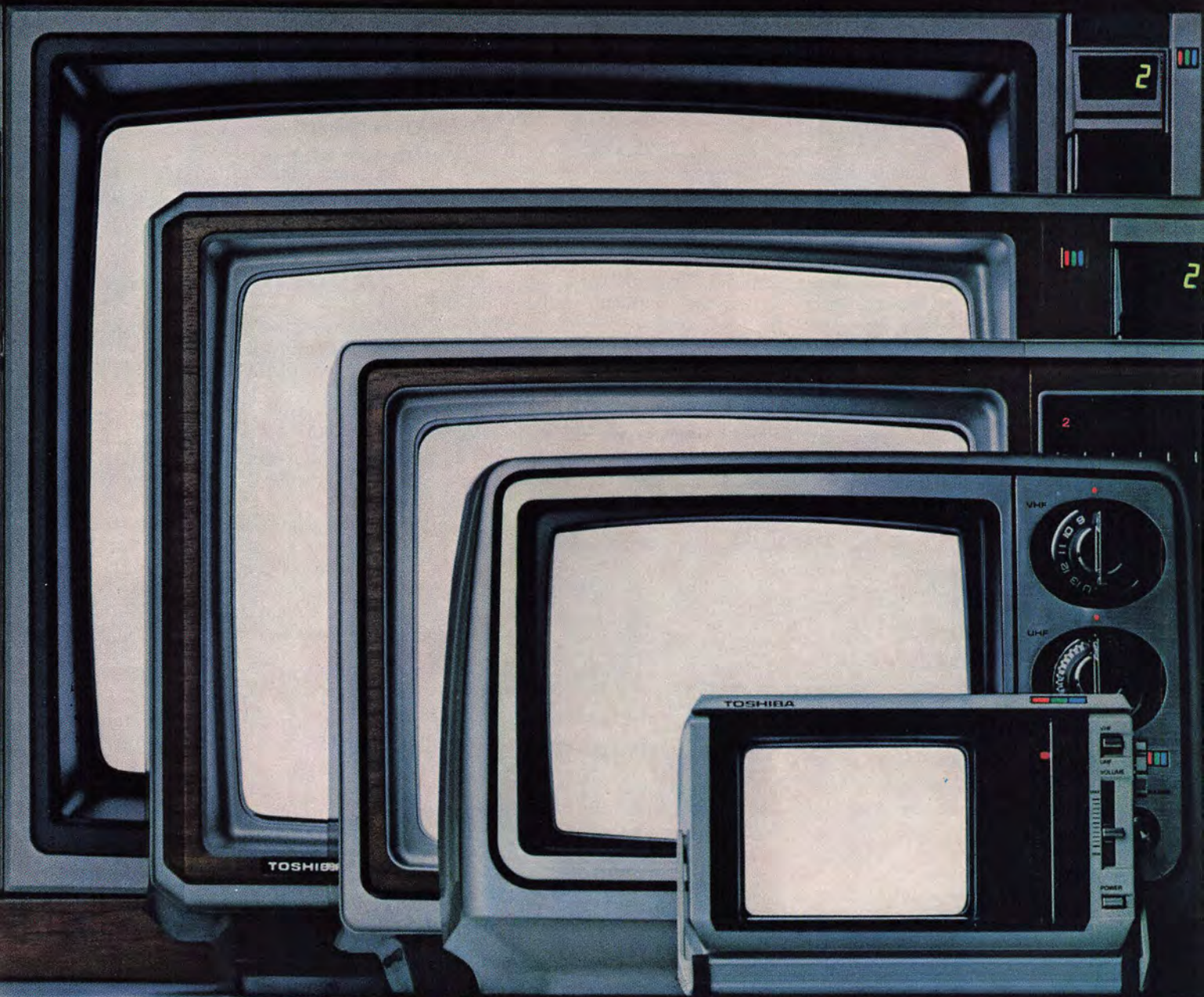
## Sleeper of the Year

LAST YEAR I GAVE YOU WICHITA State and this time I'm picking my old school, Marquette. Glenn "Doc" Rivers could be the best ever at this school with tradition. They have a solid backcourt and great newcomers. They're only a player away from the success of '77.

## Filling Out the Field

HERE ARE THE REMAINING 22 TEAMS that will make the 1982 NCAA tournament:

Alcorn State	North Carolina A&T
Ball State	Notre Dame
Centenary	Old Dominion
Clemson	Oregon State
Evansville	Penn
Fresno State	St. Joseph's
Holy Cross	South Alabama
Kansas State	USC
Lamar	West Virginia
LIU	Western Carolina
Montana State	Western Kentucky ■



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# COACH AL'S BLUE CHIPPERS

## All-American

### ALLTIME:

OSCAR ROBERTSON, *Cincinnati*, 6-5 forward

### THIS SEASON:

SAM BOWIE, *Kentucky*, 7-1 junior center  
TERRY CUMMINGS, *DePaul*, 6-9 junior forward  
KEVIN MAGEE, *Cal-Irvine*, 6-8 senior forward  
RALPH SAMPSON, *Virginia*, 7-4 junior center  
JAMES WORTHY, *NC*, 6-9 junior forward

## All-Blur

### ALLTIME:

CALVIN MURPHY, *Niagara*, 5-9 guard

### THIS SEASON:

DWIGHT ANDERSON, *USC*, 6-3 junior guard  
DICKY BEAL, *Kentucky*, 5-10 sophomore guard  
ROCKET FOSTER, *UCLA*, 6-1 junior guard  
EDDIE HUGHES, *Colorado St.*, 5-10 senior guard  
CAT JOHNSON, *Oral Roberts*, 5-10 senior guard

## All-Radar

### ALLTIME SHOOTER:

RICK MOUNT, *Purdue*, 6-4 guard

### THIS SEASON:

MITCH ANDERSON, *Bradley*, 6-8 senior forward  
QUINTIN DAILEY, *San Francisco*, 6-3 junior guard  
BYRON SCOTT, *Arizona State*, 6-5 junior guard  
TRENT TUCKER, *Minnesota*, 6-5 senior swingman  
RANDY WITTMAN, *Indiana*, 6-6 junior guard

## All-Slam-Jam-In-Your-Face

### ALLTIME:

BILL RUSSELL, *San Francisco*, 6-9 center

### THIS SEASON:

CLIFF LEVINGSTON, *Wichita St.*, 6-8 junior forward  
SAM PERKINS, *NC*, 6-9 sophomore center  
DEREK SMITH, *Louisville*, 6-6 senior forward  
LASALLE THOMPSON, *Texas*, 6-10 junior center  
DOMINIQUE WILKINS, *Georgia*, 6-7 junior forward

## All-Battleship

### ALLTIME POWER FORWARD:

LARRY BIRD, *Indiana State*, 6-9

### THIS SEASON:

MICHAEL CAGE, *San Diego State*, 6-9 sophomore  
ANTOINE CARR, *Wichita State*, 6-9 junior  
CLARK KELLOGG, *Ohio State*, 6-7 junior  
GARY SPRINGER, *Iona*, 6-7 sophomore  
CORNLY THOMPSON, *Connecticut*, 6-8 senior

## All-Take Charge

### ALLTIME:

BOB COUSY, *Holy Cross*, 6-1 guard

### THIS SEASON:

HOWARD CARTER, *LSU*, 6-5 junior guard  
SLEEPY FLOYD, *Georgetown*, 6-3 senior guard  
JOHN PAXSON, *Notre Dame*, 6-2 junior guard  
DOC RIVERS, *Marquette*, 6-4 sophomore guard  
ROB WILLIAMS, *Houston*, 6-2 junior guard

## All-Freshman

### ALLTIME:

MAGIC JOHNSON, *Michigan State*, 6-9 guard

### THIS SEASON:

GREG DREILING, *Wichita State*, 7-1 center  
PAT EWING, *Georgetown*, 7-0 center  
STUART GRAY, *UCLA*, 7-0 center  
ANTHONY JONES, *Georgetown*, 6-6 forward  
MICHAEL JORDAN, *NC*, 6-5 swingman

## Top Five Conferences

THIS SEASON, RATED FROM THE TOP TO THE BOTTOM

1. ATLANTIC COAST CONFERENCE
2. PAC-10
3. BIG 10
4. SOUTHEASTERN CONFERENCE
5. MISSOURI VALLEY CONFERENCE

## First-Round NBA Picks

MITCH ANDERSON, *Bradley*; WALLACE BRYANT, *San Francisco*; GARY CARTER, *Tennessee*; SKIP DILLARD, *DePaul*; KEITH EDMONSON, *Purdue*; SLEEPY FLOYD, *Georgetown*; BILL GARNETT, *Wyoming*; SCOTT HASTINGS, *Arkansas*; JIM JOHNSTONE, *Wake Forest*; LAFAYETTE LEVER, *Arizona State*; KEVIN MAGEE, *Cal-Irvine*; EDDIE PHILLIPS, *Alabama*; FRED ROBERTS, *BYU*; ALVIS ROGERS, *Wake Forest*; MIKE SANDERS, *UCLA*; DEREK SMITH, *Louisville*; DALE SOLOMON, *Virginia Tech*; VINCE TAYLOR, *Duke*; TERRY TEAGLE, *Baylor*; CORNY THOMPSON, *Connecticut*; DARREN TILLIS, *Cleveland State*; TRENT TUCKER, *Minnesota*; RORY WHITE, *South Alabama* ■

AL MCGUIRE restricted himself to having no player on more than one team. For his All-American team he selected the best five players, regardless of position. Except for his Top Five Conferences, all other lists were alphabetical.



*Illustration by Wilson McLean*



# THE ONES THAT GOT AWAY

*First there was  
Bill Wennington.  
Duke lost out there.  
Then Chris Mullin  
and Rodney Williams.  
Duke lost them, too.  
Finally, Uwe Blab  
and Jim Miller.  
Guess what?*

**D**UKE HAD A NAME. A REPUTATION. It also had a new coach. Mike Krzyzewski, who took the job in March 1980, replacing the popular and successful Bill Foster.

Krzyzewski (pronounced She-shefski) was young enough at 33 to believe in himself totally, but old enough to realize there were compelling reasons for Foster's departure to South Carolina after six seasons at Duke. In his first year, Krzyzewski learned that hard work in recruiting does not necessarily equal success. He didn't have to learn that when Gene Banks and Kenny Dennard graduated in 1981, his life in the Atlantic Coast Conference would be very difficult.

He needed players. Getting them has never been easy at Duke, which has the ACC's toughest admissions standards for athletes. Additionally, Duke is only a few miles from the University of North Carolina. Kids in Carolina grow up dreaming about Chapel Hill, not Durham. In his six

years, Foster successfully recruited one in-state player—Dennard.

One of the players Krzyzewski coveted most last fall was Buzz Peterson, a 6-3 guard from Asheville. Peterson liked Duke but he had always loved the Tar Heels and will wear Carolina blue this winter.

So Krzyzewski must recruit nationally at a time when players are being pressured more and more to stay close to home. Last year, with one exception, every top player Duke came close to getting and then lost mentioned distance as a factor. One player, Todd Berkenpas, a guard from Mapleton, Iowa, told assistant coach Bobby Dwyer, "If Duke were in Iowa, I would be going to Duke."

Today, Berkenpas is playing at Iowa, which is in Iowa.

Finally, there were five highly rated players not ruled out by geography or ties to other colleges that Krzyzewski hoped he could get. Four narrowed their decisions last spring to Duke and someone else. The fifth had Duke in his final three. None will play for Krzyzewski this fall.

Having been close, hearing each player say he easily could have gone to Duke and been happy, is no consolation to Krzyzewski. "The problem is, in recruiting, second isn't worth a damn," he said. "If anything, it's just more frustrating."

**B**ILL WENNINGTON, A 6-11 CENTER, grew up in Canada but moved to Brookville, Long Island, after his sophomore year of high school when his mother remarried. He is as-wide-as-a-boxcar big, with huge hands and a soft shooting touch.

Wennington liked Krzyzewski the first time he met him. "A lot of people had said he wouldn't know as much as other coaches because he was so young," Wennington said. "But that wasn't true. He was just the kind of

*By John Feinstein*

guy you felt you could talk to."

He also appealed to Wennington's coach, Bob McKillop. But McKillop had said early on he would not try to influence Wennington's decision. "I think Mike would have liked me to have intervened more than I did," McKillop said, "because it would have been in his favor. But I didn't think it was the thing to do."

Krzyzewski envisioned Wennington developing at Duke much as Mike Gminski had. He saw a huge, bright, shy 17-year-old who often spoke so softly you had to lean forward to hear him.

Wennington had been bounced around quite a bit because of his mother's divorce and subsequent remarriage. He was looking for stability, not another uprooting. That put St. John's in the lead from the start.

But he liked Duke and Virginia when he visited in the fall.

On March 22, Dwyer called Wennington to make final arrangements for a visit scheduled that week. The message coming through the phone was pretty clear. "He's leaning to St. John's," Dwyer wrote on his notepad.

"It wasn't a matter of not liking Duke, because I did, very much," Wennington said. "I felt comfortable, but the distance became more and more important as I got closer to a decision."

The day after Dwyer spoke to Wennington, Krzyzewski called McKillop. Coach gave coach the bad news. "Bill says you can still come for the visit if you want, but you're wasting your time."

Krzyzewski had come too far and Wennington was too good to give up without a final effort. The next night,

Krzyzewski, Dwyer and Gminski, who drove over from New Jersey, went to the Wennington home. There were few of the normal pleasantries exchanged when a coach visits a recruit's home.

"Why St. John's?" Krzyzewski demanded.

"Two reasons," Wennington answered. "First, I can live in the city with real people, in a real environment. I won't meet just students."

"You want real people," Krzyzewski snapped, "we'll take you to downtown Durham and introduce you to some winos."

"Second," Wennington continued, "I'll learn more about real life at St. John's because I'll live off campus and be responsible for my own bills."

"You'll be paying bills all your life," Krzyzewski answered. "Believe me, it stinks."

"I felt bad that night," Wennington said. "Coach K is a very sincere guy and I could tell he was frustrated. He'll get a lot of good players there."

But he did not get Wennington.

**C**HRIS MULLIN IS WHAT THEY call "a New York player." He is not quick and he is not fast. But he understands the game. He moves well without the ball. He is smart. And he can shoot.

Krzyzewski recognized those traits when he watched the 6-5 swingman from Brooklyn play during the summer of 1980. But in the fall, when Mullin sent Duke a transcript, Krzyzewski crossed Mullin off his list. He didn't have the grades. His school average, with a far-from-demanding curriculum, was 84. His SAT score was below 800, generally Duke's cutoff for

athletes. At the bottom of the transcript, Krzyzewski wrote "Drop."

On November 3, following Krzyzewski's instructions, assistant coach Chuck Swenson, who had been dealing with Mullin in the preliminary recruiting stages, wrote telling Mullin that Duke would not be recruiting him.

Mullin read the letter and crossed Duke off his list. "I thought that was the end," he said. "I was surprised when they called back."

They called again in early February. Late in January, Swenson had heard from another coach that Mullin's first-semester grades had been quite good and he had taken the SATs again. Krzyzewski went to watch him play again. Even more than in the summer, he liked what he saw. So he called.

They talked at length. Krzyzewski was in love. He told his assistants, "This is my kid. I'm recruiting Chris Mullin."

And, for the month of February, he did. He had dinner with the Mullin family and hit it off with the parents, Rod and Eileen, especially Eileen, who he said reminded him of his mother.

Chris visited the day the Blue Devils upset North Carolina 66-65 in overtime, as euphoric a day as the Duke campus had witnessed in many years. It was Banks' and Dennard's last home game and they made it special. Banks, off a Dennard pass, swished a 22-foot miracle shot at the buzzer to send the game into overtime, then won it with a rebound basket in the extra period. The crowd carried the seniors off the court.

"I just loved the atmosphere," Mullin said. "The people were so into the game. I knew Duke was the kind of place where I wanted to play."

That night, Mullin came to the Krzyzewski house. He watched a replay of the game in the recreation room. He played with Krzyzewski's daughters and talked at length with Krzyzewski's wife, Mickie.

"For a while after I got home, I thought I wanted to go to Duke," Mullin said.

His parents, especially his mother, loved the idea. "I wanted him to go there," Eileen Mullin said. "But in the end, Chrissie didn't want to leave all his friends."

Distance, again. For the month of March, Mullin waffled. Krzyzewski ran up and down the state of New York watching his playoff games, sent telegrams wishing Mullin luck and called. The Mullin file is thick with memos of conversations.

But as March ran down, the talk

## Duke's Mr. K

**MIKE KRZYZEWSKI**, age 34, second-year basketball coach, Duke University. First-year record 17-13, team advanced to NIT quarterfinals.

Born and reared in Chicago. Shooting guard at Weber High School, averaged 22 points a game. Recruited by Bobby Knight and enrolled at Army in 1965. Three-year starter, team captain as senior. Knight: "He came to school as one of our weakest defensive players and left as one of our strongest. . . . As smart a player as I've coached."

Met his wife Mickie, a stewardess, while at Army; have two children, with a third due by December.

Served five years in the Army, coaching various base teams. After discharge

in 1974, applied for job as a graduate assistant at Indiana under Knight. During interview with Knight, Mickie remained in room. Afterwards, Knight told Krzyzewski, "You've got everything it takes to be a great head coach. But your wife is a pain in the ass." Hired anyway.

Left the next year to become coach at Army. Record there 73-59, including an NIT appearance. Recommended for Duke job by Knight after athletic director Tom Butters called looking for a recommendation. Butters: "I had heard the name but didn't know a thing about him." Two interviews later he was offered a five-year contract.

Believes in Knight's system totally. Teams play aggressive, man-to-man defense at all times. Different from Knight off the court. Treats wife more as a partner than anything else.



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became less positive. Eileen Mullin began sounding unsure on the phone.

On March 31, scheduled to visit the Mullin home that night, Krzyzewski called Rod Mullin. There are seven numbered items from the conversation in Krzyzewski's notes.

No. 5 says: "Father says he doesn't see how he can turn it—Duke—down."

No. 7 is an observation by Krzyzewski. "He's going to St. John's."

Krzyzewski believed the visit might rekindle memories of the February weekend. He would not come on as hard as he had with Wennington but he intended to transmit one message to Chris Mullin: Duke is the school and I am the coach for you. Krzyzewski memorized his speech as he and assistant coach Dwyer flew to New York that night.

When they arrived, they were greeted by Rod and Eileen Mullin. Chris Mullin was out with friends.

"I just didn't want to go through the pain of telling him," Chris Mullin said.

As he walked into the living room, Krzyzewski could feel his stomach twist into a knot. Mullin was his kid, the one guy who would understand why Krzyzewski was the right coach for him.

He and Dwyer stayed briefly. No one in the room wanted to linger. "It was just awful," Eileen Mullin said. "But Chrissie wanted to stay close."

As Krzyzewski said goodbye, Eileen Mullin began to cry. Three weeks later, their paths crossed at an all-star game. They talked briefly. Again, Eileen Mullin began to cry.

All that Krzyzewski could do was dictate the note. "Best of luck at St. John's. . . ."

**W**ENNINGTON HAD BEEN an uphill fight from the beginning and Mullin had been a wham-bam, but Rodney Williams had been handled perfectly, Krzyzewski thought.

The visits to Daytona Beach had gone well and so had Rodney's visit to campus. The 6-7 forward had gotten along well with the team. Krzyzewski had freshman Doug McNeely call Williams once a week to keep in touch.

By February, Williams' list was down to Duke, Florida, South Carolina, Marquette and Virginia. "Really, though, there were only two schools," Williams said. "Duke and Florida."

By March, Krzyzewski thought he

was the leader. The first week in April, during a visit to Williams' school, Rodney and his coach, Marshall Bradley, had talked about Krzyzewski being the speaker at the team banquet April 9. The national signing date, the first opportunity to sign a letter of intent, was April 8.

Krzyzewski knew Williams was a fine player, and by recruiting him Krzyzewski could prove that Foster's recruiting of Banks was not merely an exception to the rule that Duke could not sign top black players.

On Sunday April 5, between planes in Atlanta, Krzyzewski called Williams. He had told him he and Swenson would check in that day to see how things were going.

When Williams answered, they talked easily for a few minutes. Suddenly, the conversation turned specific. According to the scrawled notes Krzyzewski excitedly wrote minutes later on the plane, it went like this:

Williams: "Coach, I'd really like you to speak at the banquet; then after, I can make my announcement. But my coach says we can't pay for a speaker."

Krzyzewski: "Rodney, my payment will be getting the player we want to have at Duke next year. Don't worry about it."

Williams: "Coach, can I have number 30?"

Krzyzewski: "Rodney, you can have any number you want."

Krzyzewski put Swenson on to talk about housing for the next fall. When the conversation ended, Krzyzewski and Swenson felt like they could float home to Durham.

Krzyzewski, always low-key, said, "We've still got a lot of work to do with admissions and getting him actually signed."

"Right then I was coming," Williams said. "I went back and forth, but for a while it was Duke. That's why I asked about the number."

The next day, the admissions department called. Rodney Williams was not admissible. Krzyzewski was stunned. He knew that Williams' boards were below 600, but he also knew the admissions department, working with Foster, had agreed there were rare occasions in which a student, especially one from an inner-city school, was a better student than his boards reflected. Banks had been admitted on that basis and would graduate with his class; in fact, he was a speaker at graduation.

Krzyzewski had presented Williams to admissions with Banks in mind. But

these were not the same people Foster had worked with and they weren't playing by the same unwritten rules.

Krzyzewski was about to score his first recruiting coup and the school was taking it from him. He pleaded. Finally, he went to top administrators.

"I told the administration that when they hired me I assumed it was because they trusted me. I told them I merited that trust until I proved I didn't deserve it."

A compromise was struck. Williams would be admitted, but only if he agreed to attend summer school prior to his freshman year to lighten his course load and only if Krzyzewski again outlined the academic difficulties before signing Williams.

Although he knew Williams was nervous about handling the academics at Duke, Krzyzewski agreed. Tuesday night he flew to Daytona Beach.

The meeting did not go well. "I had the feeling the minute I walked in the house that something was wrong," Krzyzewski said. "Rodney was different, his parents were different."

Williams says now that he had told Florida coach Norman Sloan in February, during a visit, that he wanted to go to Florida.

"They thought they had him, so they ignored him and Rodney thought they had lost interest," said coach Marshall Bradley. "A few days before the banquet, I saw [Florida assistant] Monte Towe. He asked how Rodney was and I said, 'He's fine and he's going to Duke.' That's when they got back in touch with Rodney."

"I was shocked when Rodney told me there was another school even involved," said Sloan.

Two days before the national signing date, Williams had come into Bradley's office and discussed drafting a letter for him, thanking the schools that had recruited him but telling them he was going to Duke. That was Monday. On Wednesday, Bradley showed Williams the letter.

"Hold on to it," Williams told him.

"I thought Monday I was going to Duke," Williams said. "But after I talked to coach Sloan again, I began to think about the fact that way back in the beginning, Florida had been my first choice, and I was always told your first choice is the right choice."

After the meeting Tuesday, Krzyzewski had flown to Denver to sign 6-8 forward Jay Bryan. In the meantime, McNeely, Vince Taylor and Banks were calling Williams because he had expressed doubts about a black succeeding at Duke.

Late Wednesday, Krzyzewski returned home. "If we don't sign him tomorrow night," he told his assistants, "we've lost him."

The next afternoon, Krzyzewski flew back to Daytona Beach. Williams was hard to find at the banquet and he left early. He never said a word to Krzyzewski or Bradley. Bradley took Krzyzewski back to his house. He was as confused as the Duke coach.

Shortly after they arrived, the phone rang. Bradley took the call.

"Rodney, what's going on?" he said. "You did? When? Why didn't you tell me? Jeez, Rodney."

Williams had signed with Florida at one o'clock that afternoon. Like Chris Mullin, he did not want to look Krzyzewski in the eye and say no.

"I could easily have gone to Duke and been happy," Williams said. "I wanted coach K to speak at the banquet because everyone on my team liked him so much. But I wanted to stay at home. I was feeling pressure all year to do that."

Losing Mullin had hurt. But this was worse because only days earlier Williams had said yes. Krzyzewski called home where his wife was sitting in the basement with Dwyer, Swenson and some friends, awaiting the call. After telling his wife, Krzyzewski asked for Dwyer.

"I'm going to see Uwe Blab in Illinois tomorrow," he said.

Rodney Williams was the only Duke recruit who did not receive a letter wishing him luck. Krzyzewski still thinks something went amiss the last 72 hours. He admits he hasn't got a shred of proof.

The list was dwindling now. Bryan was signed and so was Greg Wendt, a 6-6 swingman from Detroit, a superb shooter who had come on strong late, impressing the Duke coaches who had been cool toward him. Danny Meagher, a 6-7 sleeper hope from Canada, had committed in September. Todd Anderson, 6-8, another late developer, strong but raw, a Minnesota boy, would also be at Duke in the fall.

So there were four the coaches liked. But no super player, no one to take the "Can he recruit?" label off.

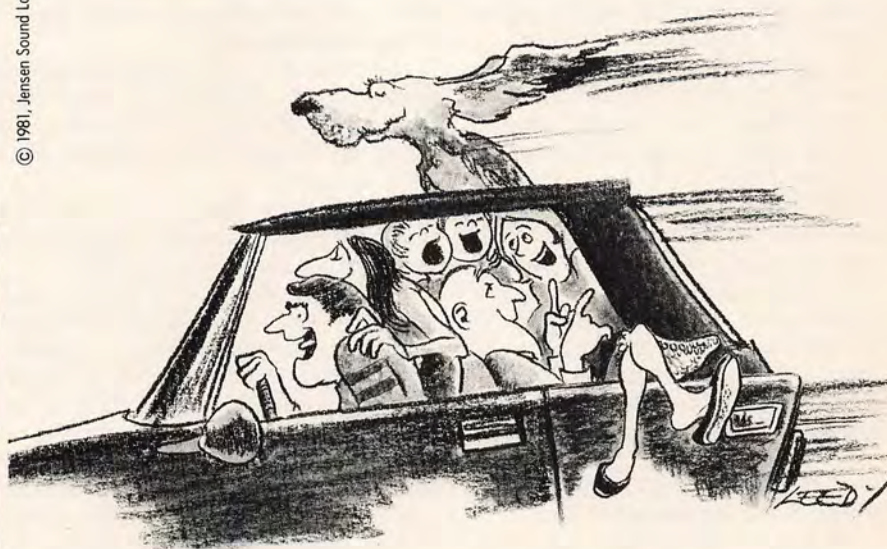
**B**LAB WAS A PLAYER MANY had been cautious about early. Duke, especially Swenson, liked him all along. He was gawky at 7-1 and still learning the game, but he had a nice touch for a big man. He was also a "Duke kid," a fine student who wanted to study criminal law after college.



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Blab had come to the United States from West Germany as an exchange student his junior year. He was living in Effingham with the family of Chuck Keller, a financial contributor to the University of Illinois.

That, the Duke people thought, was their toughest battle. Keller wanted Blab to go to Illinois. By March, Blab had narrowed his choices to Illinois, Duke, Indiana and Maryland.

Blab had grown close to Swenson, who wrote him frequently since phone calls to the Keller house were not allowed under the recruiting guidelines set up by the Kellers. Blab and his coach at Effingham, Jim Maxedon.

This was a strange situation. Krzyzewski did not like competing with his mentor, Indiana coach Bobby Knight. The two staffs were close. At the same time, he believed Maryland assistant Tom Abatemarco was bad-mouthing the Duke program, telling Blab that if he went to Duke he would play with bad players his whole career.

Krzyzewski was about to call Lefty Driesell to confront him when he got a call from Knight—who had been called by Driesell. Knight told Krzyzewski that Driesell had called to ask him to back off on Blab. "You don't need a center, you got one already," Driesell said, according to Knight. And, Driesell added, Blab would be better off at Maryland than at Duke because Maryland had better players and Knight should tell Blab that.

"I know Krzyzewski is your boy, but I need a center," Driesell said.

Krzyzewski and Knight decided Driesell could see the battle was lost and was desperate. Driesell confirms calling Knight but denies putting down Duke or Krzyzewski.

April quickly became May and still no decision. Illinois went on Big-10 probation because of its football troubles and suddenly it was Indiana and Duke. On the morning of May 12, Swenson walked into the office at 8:30 to find the phone ringing.

It was Blab. They talked for an hour. It was Indiana and Duke, even though Keller still wanted him to go to Illinois. Swenson had convinced Blab he would get plenty of competition in practice at Duke, something he had worried about because of the "bad players" question.

They broke down the decision.

Socially, which school did Uwe prefer?

Duke.

Academically?

Duke.

For basketball?

Before, Indiana; now Duke because he would play more.

"Uwe," Swenson said, "you just told me you're coming to Duke."

Yes he had, maybe he had, no he hadn't. Blab was confused. Duke still had a visit left. Did Blab want Swenson and Krzyzewski to fly to Effingham?

Yes.

They left that afternoon. Arriving in Chicago, they called the Keller house. Did Uwe still want them to come? Yes.

Next, they flew to St. Louis, then a two-hour drive to Effingham. It was almost 11 by the time they reached the hotel. Another call to Uwe. When do you want to see us?

Right now, Blab said.

Blab came to the hotel alone. When the huge youngster walked through the door, Krzyzewski was struck by how tired he looked. There was little enthusiasm in his voice. They talked well past midnight.

At one point Blab said, "No matter what I do I will not be happy."

Krzyzewski told him the reverse was true, that either way he was going to a fine school and would become a better player.

"Think, Uwe, in the last few weeks, how you have been pushed. Chuck Keller has pushed you toward Illinois, Jim Maxedon has favored Indiana. Who has pushed you toward Duke? Only one person: You."

Blab seemed to feel better. The three shook hands warmly and Blab left. Burned in the past, Krzyzewski and Swenson decided not to decide what they thought.

The next morning the phone rang early. It was Swenson's father. His grandfather had died overnight.

An hour later, the phone rang again. It was Chuck Keller. Uwe had called his parents in West Germany. Keller thought he was going to Duke. Uwe had gone down to school to see Maxedon.

They waited. At 1 p.m., Keller called again. Blab had just signed with Indiana. Keller wanted to know something: His own son had applied to Duke late and Krzyzewski had said he would try to help the family deal with admissions. Did this mean Krzyzewski would no longer help? Young Chuck Keller was admitted to Duke.

"Mike Krzyzewski is as classy a guy as you'll meet," Chuck Keller said.

Knight wanted to let Blab be interviewed for this story. "He's adjusting to college, he doesn't need to talk to you," Knight said. "Turning them

down was one of the hardest things he ever had to do."

The refrain grows familiar.

**T**HERE WAS ONE FINAL HOPE. Jim Miller, a 6-8 forward, was also "a Duke kid." He was also a Krzyzewski player, hard-nosed, aggressive. And he was from Princeton, West Virginia, where he had played in high school with Allen Williams, a Duke sophomore. Jim's mother and Allen's mother were friends.

Miller's final list remained large right through April—Duke, Virginia, West Virginia, Wake Forest, South Carolina.

Miller's situation was unusual because his mother, a divorcee, was tentatively planning to move wherever her son went to school so she had to be recruited almost as much as the son.

It was not until late April that the Millers visited campus. "I loved it," Jim Miller said. "I knew it was the kind of place and kind of program I could be comfortable in. My mom liked it a lot, too."

But Virginia also seemed to be Miller's kind of place, and so did Wake Forest.

The deadline for signing a national letter of intent was May 15. The final week was an hysterical round of phone calls: Dwyer to Miller; Krzyzewski to Brenda Miller; Allen Williams to Miller; Mrs. Williams to Mrs. Miller; Krzyzewski to Miller.

Brenda Miller had to go to Virginia Beach for a convention two days before the deadline. This presented a problem since her signature had to be on the letter. Solution: Jim would sign in the morning, then Dwyer would drive to Virginia Beach to get her signature.

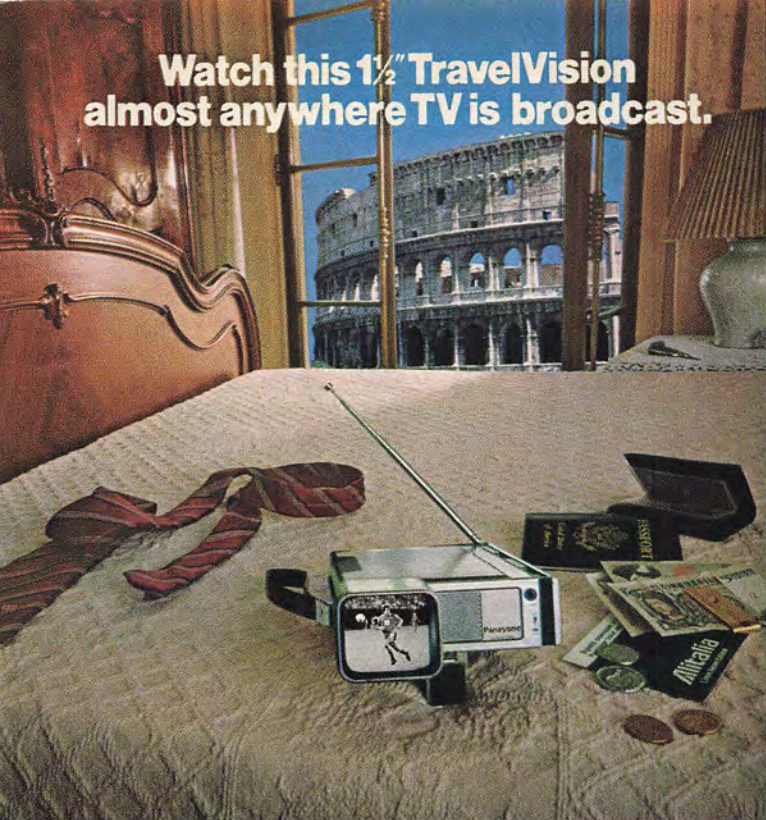
The night of May 14 Brenda Miller talked to her son very late. "When I hung up, I was sure he was going to Duke," she said.

"I could see where she might get that impression," Miller said. "But I went to bed still basically undecided. I didn't sleep much."

At about 1 a.m. on May 15 Krzyzewski talked to Miller. He told him Dwyer was en route by car, was that okay? It was fine. He told him that because Duke had used up its visits, Miller would have to sign the letter and put it in his mailbox for Dwyer to pick up. Miller didn't see what difference it made if Dwyer came inside. No reason to mess with rules, Krzyzewski said.

"I thought, this time it just has to

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go our way," Krzyzewski said. "But by then I was too scared to even think much."

Dwyer, making the four-hour drive to Princeton for about the 12th time, was so excited he barely could keep his car on the very familiar road. "I kept trying to think if there was anything else we should be doing," he said. "I couldn't think of anything."

Jim Miller says he woke up early that morning. He spoke again to his mother. "Finally, I thought about something my coach had said in the fall," he said. "He told me, 'Go where they want you the most.' Virginia was the first school that recruited me."

He decided: Virginia. "It was just a feeling, I couldn't tell you why. I guess I was influenced a little by getting to play with [Ralph] Sampson."

Dwyer, sitting in his hotel room waiting for a call, finally called Krzyzewski that morning. Krzyzewski called Brenda Miller. She gave him the news.

When it was over, Krzyzewski had to get out of the office, away from the stack of files and the visions they conjured.

"At first I was really angry," he said. "But I started thinking about something Vic Bubas [the coach who built the Duke teams in the '60s] had told me the year before. He said, 'When you're building something that will be really strong, it doesn't all happen at once.'"

"I said to my wife that night, 'We've got to get going with the juniors.' We came so close, there must be a lot of things we're doing well to be right there. We have to figure out how to finish first."

"I felt like we had lost five straight one-point games. I let all the attention recruiting gets in the ACC get to me. I wanted to shove it up a few people's rumps because they said I couldn't recruit."

The morning after Miller signed with Virginia, Krzyzewski went to his office. He dictated two final letters, one to Brenda Miller, one to Jimmy Miller. He put them in the Miller file.

He put the Miller file with all the others marked "Class of '81." He took the huge, heavy stack of manila folders and shoved them into the bottom drawer in a cabinet.

He went to another drawer and pulled out another stack of folders. On top, they were marked "Class of '82." He sat down and began reading. ■

JOHN FEINSTEIN's last article for INSIDE SPORTS was on Art Schlichter.

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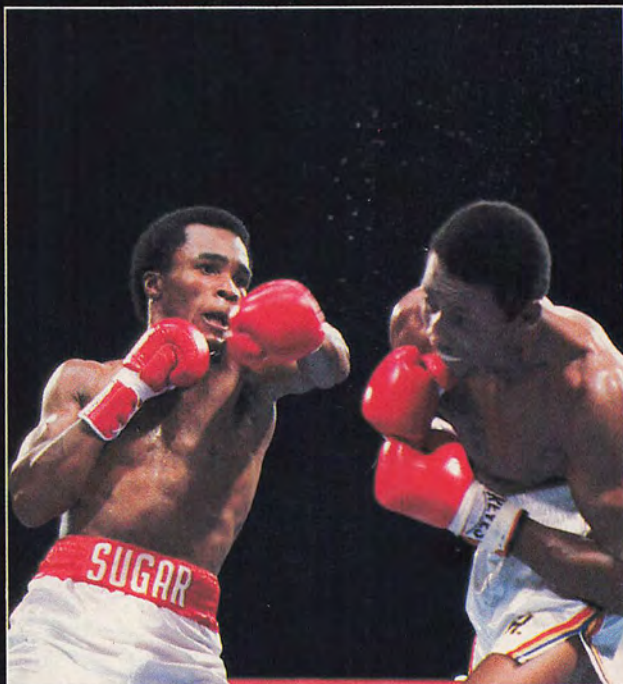
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# THAT CHAMPIONSHIP SEASON

**B**oil down all the truths of that championship season of 1981 and one stands alone: To beat Tommy Hearns, Sugar Ray Leonard had to get inside his opponent's long reach. He did—and he ended up winning the richest fight in history.

Leonard's prize was sole possession of the welterweight crown. Only one other champ—middleweight Marvin Hagler—reigns supreme, an absurd situation that sometimes dulls the luster of a championship fight. But when the fighters are willing, it hardly matters whether they're fighting for the WBA or the WBC version of a title. We admire their spirit, we celebrate their courage and we applaud their gift to us—that championship season of 1981.



**PHOTOGRAPHS  
BY JAMES DRAKE**

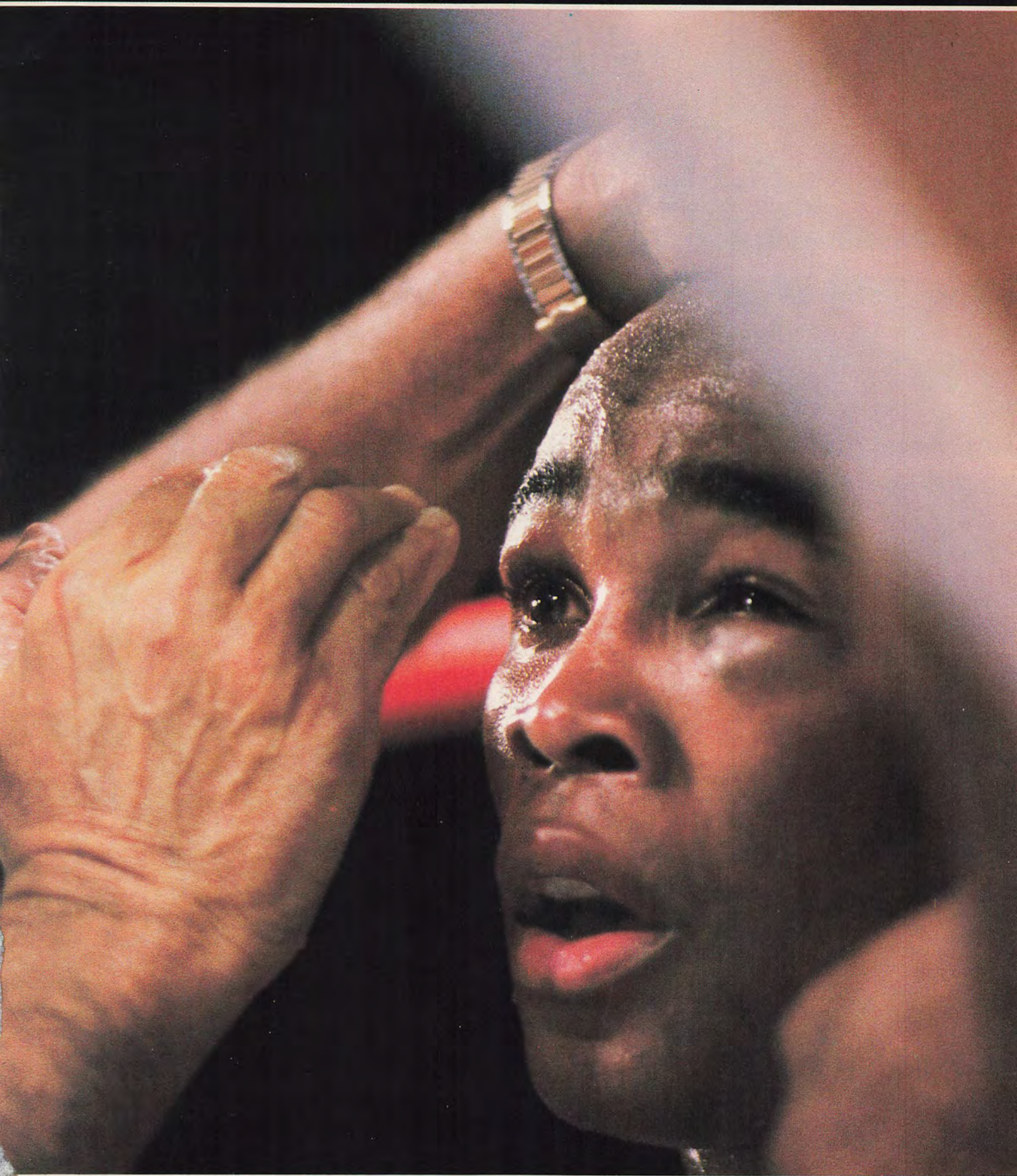


**T**he left hook is a puncher's cruelest weapon, and it was used most cruelly by WBC lightweight champ Alexis Arguello (above) in beating Ray "Boom Boom" Mancini and by Salvador Sanchez (below) in defending his WBC featherweight title against Wilfredo Gomez. Middleweight champ Marvin Hagler (right) bloodied Vito Antuofermo with hard lefts en route to a TKO.



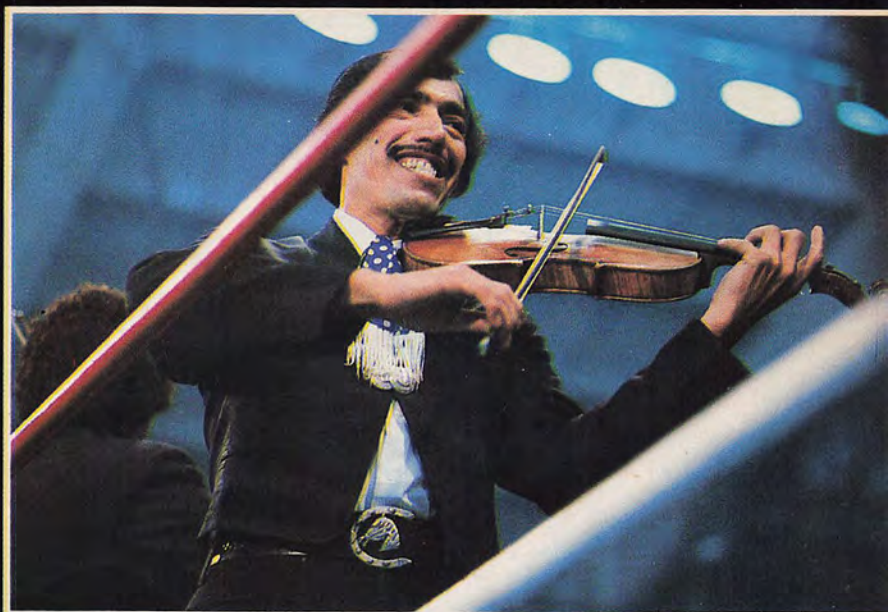






**T**he corner speaks with one voice. While working on Leonard's swollen left eye, trainer Angelo Dundee warned: "You're blowing it, babe!" Moments later, Leonard swarmed all over Hearn.



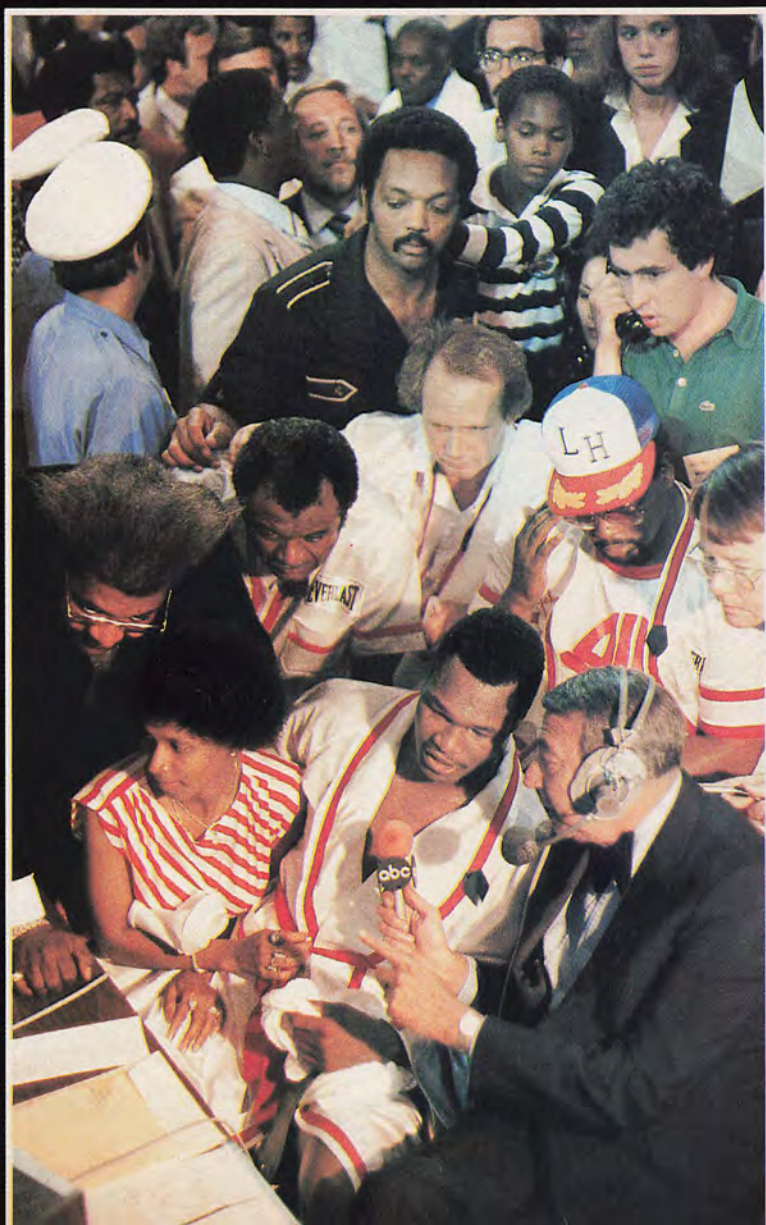


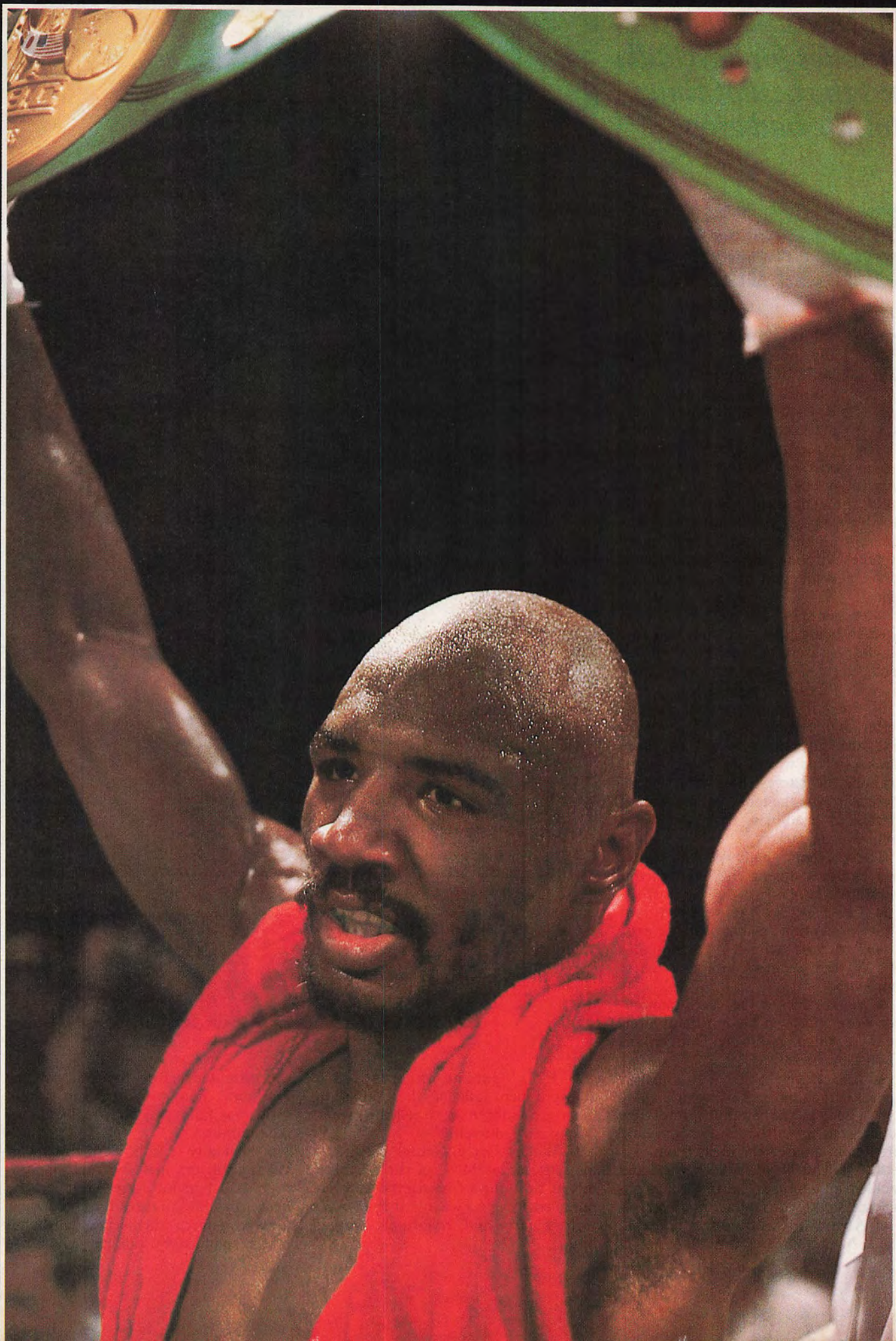
**C**ard girls are now a fixture at championship fights. The promoters of the Sanchez-Gomez battle even added colorfully costumed musicians—but, by the eighth round, the only violins Gomez was hearing were inside his head.





**T**hese days, almost every championship fight has three familiar scenes that close the show. The winner's handlers and friends slip through the ropes and rush to his side; the champ (Hagler, opposite page) holds his championship belt aloft; and then he (WBC heavyweight champ Larry Holmes) is interviewed by a guy with a tuxedo and earphones on.





*1981 was the worst  
of times for baseball,  
but the best of times  
for the bad guys*

**BY  
THOMAS BOSWELL**

**B**ASEBALL HAS TRADITIONALLY possessed a wonderful lack of seriousness. The game's best player, Babe Ruth, was a Rabelaisian fat man, and its most loved manager, Casey Stengel, spoke gibberish. In this lazy sport, only the pitcher pours sweat. Then he takes three days off. Nobody much gets hurt, unless you count sore arms. Spring training is a gentle boot camp of aches without pains. Where else do foes crack jokes in battle as at home plate?

No other sport can truly say it is so close to being play. Yet now that fine playfulness is in danger. Baseball has replaced its easygoing ways with gravity, with a foolish seriousness.

Nothing focused this shift in tone better than the World Series, won in six games by the Dodgers over the Yankees. This wasn't an October celebration, the harvest of a ripe season. Rather, it was the tense, inflamed stuff of tabloid headlines. Even the weird comedy was dark.

These events shadowed the Yanks and Dodgers during the busy playoff month of October:

■ Two New York players were put under protection against death threats.

■ Two Los Angeles earthquakes (4.5 on the Richter) hit on a Series game day.

■ Yankee owner George Steinbrenner wore a cast on his left hand after, he says, punching out two Dodger fans in an L.A. elevator.

■ An alleged thief was shot by guards in the Chavez Ravine parking lot.

■ The Yankee Stadium interview room went up in flames at 1 a.m. and firemen evacuated the press room.

■ A fan in New York charged and tackled an umpire, the first such on-field attack in the majors in 40 years.

■ A woman was found strangled in the L.A. press headquarters hotel.



# INDECENT

■ Rick Cerone interrupted a chewout/pep talk of the Yanks by George Steinbrenner to tell the owner, "Go screw yourself."

■ Yankee Graig Nettles celebrated his selection as MVP of the AL playoffs by fulfilling a five-year fantasy: He punched Reggie Jackson at the team's victory party and, reportedly, decked him.

■ Minutes before the start of the Dodgers' pennant-clinching game, snow was falling in Montreal's Olympic Stadium.

■ So many objects were thrown at visiting players in New York, including a ball that hit Tony Armas in the back, that the Yankees implored their fans to govern themselves. Bleacher fans responded by pointing en masse



# EXPOSURE

at the next offender, then chanting, "Asshole, asshole," as police led the miscreant away.

■ A player with a \$23 million contract, after starting the Series 0-for-16, called timeout after a single to collect the ball for a souvenir. Dave Winfield finished the Series 1-for-22.

■ Perhaps the least-known player in the Series became its central figure.

George Frazier became the first honest man ever to lose three Series games.

■ The only team records set were also negative. The Dodgers walked more batters and the Yanks left more men stranded than any clubs ever in a six-game Series.

■ In the end, the world championship was between two teams that finished fourth and sixth in the "second

## *Ron Cey is beamed by Gossage*

season," while the sport's only .600 team—the Cincinnati Reds—never made the playoffs.

■ The last game of the Series was played on the latest date in baseball history—October 28—in a stadium with a power failure on Bowie Kuhn's birthday.

■ Finally, Steinbrenner, the Dodgers' most valuable player, wrote a grim, graceless public apology for his team's performance. In fact, he was the Yankee who needed to apologize. Instead of letting the Dodgers be remembered as the gallants who surmounted deficits of 0-2, 1-2 and 0-2 to beat Houston, Montreal and New York, Steinbrenner did his worst to make them live in lore as recipients of Yankee Lemon-aid.

This five-alarm blend of violence, danger, bad blood, bad manners and the bizarre may be typical of modern life, but it is alien to baseball. Once, Urban Shocker was a Yankee pitcher. Now, "urban shocker" is a baseball headline.

Why does the game's flavor seem in danger of changing?

Usually, each season leaves a specific aftertaste. Recently, these have been easy to identify, and savory, too. From the star-crossed 1975 Red Sox to the 1976 Big Red Machine, from "Reggie, Reggie, Reggie" in 1977 to the Yankee-Red Sox playoff of 1978, from the Pirates' family to the Phillies' anti-family, that lingering baseball aftertaste has been sweet—or, at least, bittersweet.

Now, a sourness is curdling our appreciation. To a significant degree, the reason is that adult disease, money. Nothing begets a cold seriousness like cold cash, nor erodes that valuable vestige of childhood, a love of play. Baseball's illness is that it's saturated with dollars. When the game was poorer, it was richer.

Each sport has a different source of appeal, speaks to a different part of our natures. For instance, football and baseball, our war and peace of games, don't appeal to different people so much as they appeal to different parts of the same person. When a sport doesn't know what it is selling, doesn't know which subliminal buttons it's pushing, then it's up a creek. That's baseball's problem. The game's unmentioned claim is that it puts us in touch with a fleeting sense of natural order. When baseball loses that therapeutic quality of being more in touch

***Photograph By Bill Kendall***



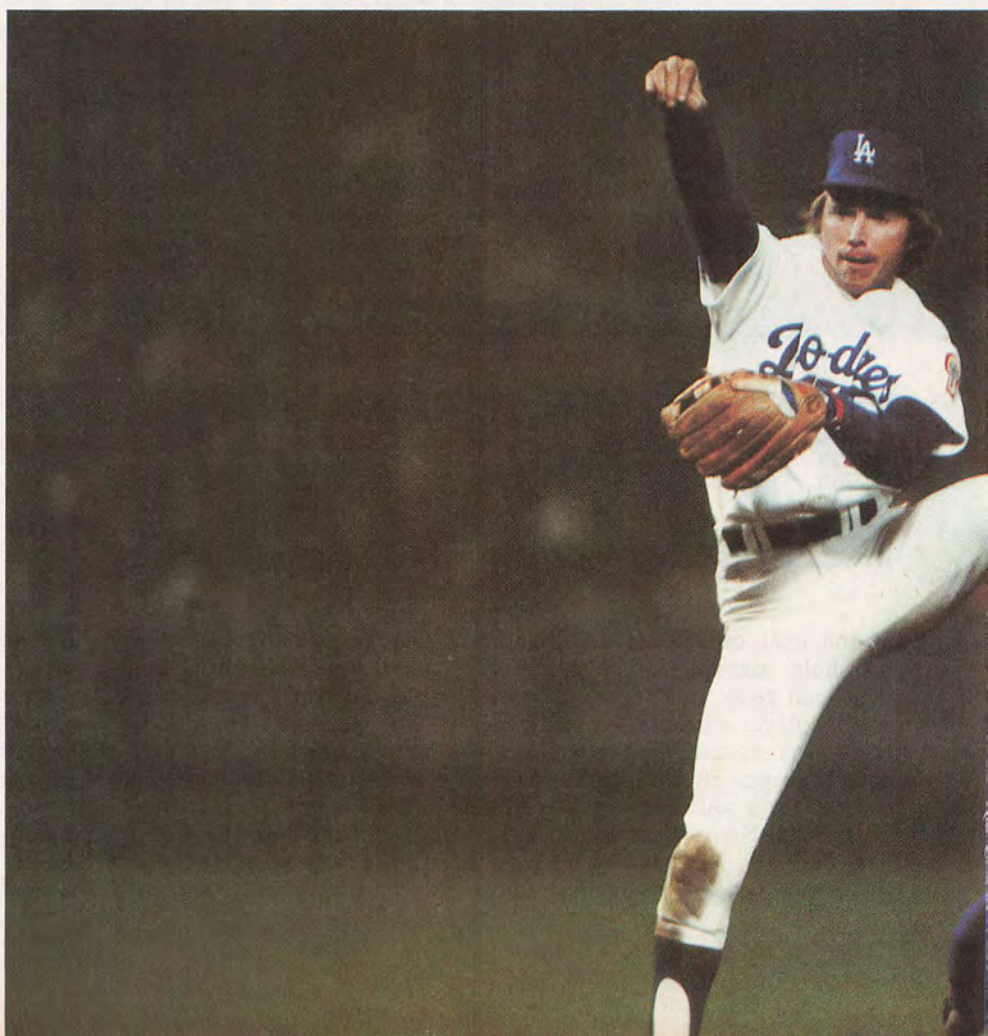
PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANTHONY NESTE (TOP LEFT); ROBERT HAGEDOHN

with nature's order than man's disorder, then it loses a powerful hold on us. That's why this year left a feeling of damage, almost remorse. Instead of taking us out of a world that's too much with us, baseball rubbed our noses in the worst of Everyday.

Baseball's one blessing of 1981 was that—from its two-month strike to its sham-and-shame split season right through its World Series—every blackguard trend in the sport came forward, brashly and proudly identified itself for what it was, then, at the very moment of triumph, fell on its face. Fortunately for baseball, this was truly a season of indecent exposure.

By far the ugliest trend—a kind of death wish motivated by greed—is the sport's apparent determination to transform itself from a leisurely six-month summer game into a one-month autumn playoff war for TV. Say hello to the October game. It arrived this year. Hope you like it, 'cause it's going to take the devil's own fight to kill the cursed thing.

This season will be recalled as the year when baseball mimicked the discredited example of pro basketball and hockey by expanding its playoff format to eight teams. This short-term

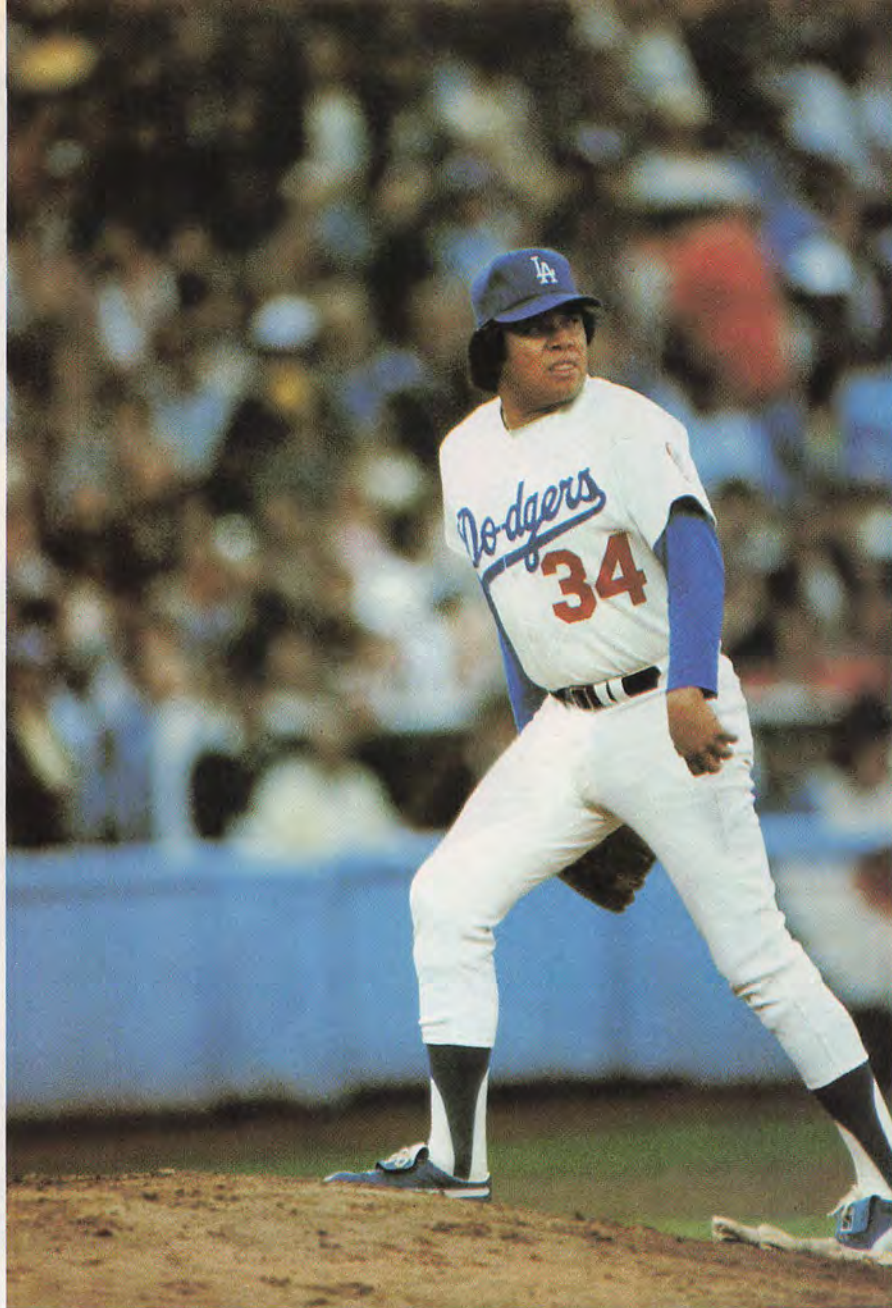


moneymaker—in the form of three divisions and a wild card in each league—will probably be in place in both leagues by 1983, with the AL leading the lemmings as they dash to the sea.

For its first century, baseball was a summer-long test of an entire team over more than 150 games. If our just-completed season is prologue, that may all change. After all, one year before baseball celebrated its centennial in 1969, the postseason still meant two teams in the Series. Now, just 13 years later, we had an eight-team, three-week stampede. That's what you call a trend that can't be ignored.

While the notorious split season is dead for good and all, it introduced us to a sad novelty: meaningless regular-season games involving the sport's top teams. Ask fans of the Yankees, Dodgers and Phillies how exciting they found August and September as their teams coasted into the playoffs. That's what may happen in the future when more and more teams realize that they have a playoff spot locked—thanks to the largesse of a wild-card system—with weeks, even months, still to play.

The regular season of the future will seem interminably long. After all, the point won't be to prove which team is



the best in its league, but simply to decide who's fourth-best (and therefore in the playoffs) and who's merely fifth-best (and therefore out of the playoffs).

On the day baseball becomes primarily a playoff sport—and that's what an eight-team system is—there will be many a season when everybody goes home without a clear sense of who baseball's best team really is. Lest we forget, Los Angeles' success was built on a fluky playoff-style three-man starting rotation of Cy Young winner Fernando Valenzuela, Burt Hooton and Jerry Reuss, which had a collective postseason ERA of 1.78. If these Dodgers seem like a jury-rigged, it-could-only-happen-in-the-playoffs bunch, just wait.

In a season defaced by a strike be-

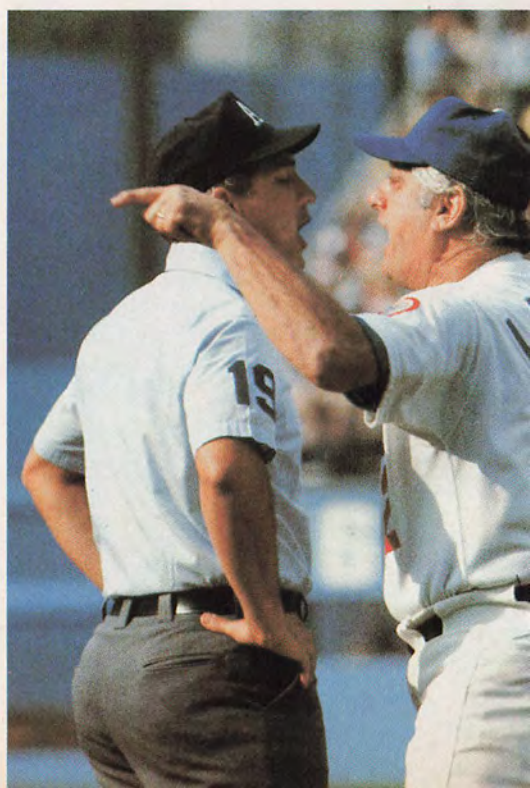
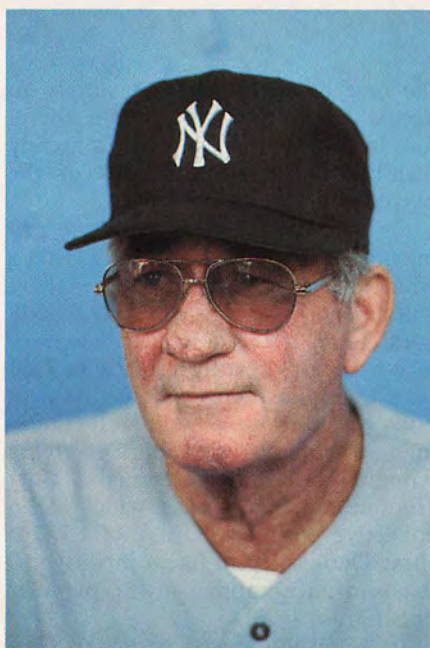
*The dogged overachievers in the Dodgers' long-running infield—Lopes (15), Russell (left)—plus super-rookie Valenzuela (above) finally brought L.A. a world title*

tween rich players and richer owners, it was appropriate that the Dodgers and Yankees meet in the Series. Once, the Dodgers epitomized scruffy underdog class while the Yanks were overdog class. Now, they just represent old greed and new greed, Dodger franchise-jumping rapacity and Yankee free-agent grabbing. No teams approach these two for sober self-importance. The world champions invoke The Big Dodger in the Sky. Other



PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHUCK SOLOMON (TOP LEFT AND BOTTOM RIGHT); ANTHONY NESTE

*All did not end well for the Yankees. Winfield (above) became a parody of a player in full choke. Jackson (top right) sat down for three games during the Series. And the Yankee manager became a monster with two heads and no brain called Lemonbrenner (Lemon, near right; Steinbrenner, far right). Unlike Lemon, who pulled Tommy John in the sixth game, Lasorda (center right) stuck with his ace—Valenzuela—through some trying times, took out his frustrations on the umpires and came back to win it all.*



clubs have chickens as cheerleaders. Only the Dodgers would appropriate God for a mascot. Meanwhile, the Yankees have taken secularity to a new low.

As much as any man, Steinbrenner embodies the ambiguous tendencies afoot in baseball. He's a first-and-10 capitalist in a bunt-and-run world.

In constructing the Yankees over the years—with a huge scouting and minor league network, with canny trades and free-agent grabs—Steinbrenner has been at his best: a smart, daring long-range conceptualizer, one of the few leaders in baseball worth the name.

In guiding his team through a crisis, Steinbrenner is at his worst and ugliest. It's not that he's the rotten, jack-booted Baron von Steingraber of caricature, but that his business and football notions are destructively out of place in baseball. Football is an adrenaline game. Baseball is a sport of properly balanced metabolism. Steinbrenner hasn't a clue as to the difference.

In football, you can fire the coach and threaten the players, bribe and intimidate with instant rewards and punishments. A coach must manipulate emotions on this ultraviolet end of the behavior spectrum.

In baseball, a sense of moderation is almost a philosophical precept. The best "gamers" have an internal tuning fork that they strike before each game, which gives them just the proper energy and spark, just the right relaxation and steady concentration, that baseball has always demanded.



Such a Yankee, in tune with his sport, is Nettles. That's why he bristles at Steinbrenner's violently stirring the pot. "Some teams are under the gun; we're under the thumb," said Nettles, nicknamed Fido since he's always in the master's doghouse. "The sweetest words to George are, 'Yes, Boss.'"

The darkest corner of Steinbrenner's personality is his need to dominate those he pays. In a strange sense, the Yankees are a team of athletic wild horses, all of whom Steinbrenner has ridden and tamed. He has found every man's price, every man's breaking point.

This World Series, which was lost more than won, was the testing ground where Steinbrenner's joyless practices came to grief on the rocks of a temperate game. By the final four

losses, the Yanks had become disoriented and passive, the victim of too many fired managers, too many public rebukes, too many vague threats, too many capricious benchings and obtuse strategies that smelled like half-baked notions cooked up in an owner's box.

In the clutch, bats grew slow and tentative. On the bases, veterans found their instincts gone haywire as they inexplicably ran in the wrong direction. The worst of all contagious baseball diseases—pressing under pressure—became epidemic. Journeyman players, made confident by their reincarnation in pinstripes, suddenly reverted to humbler pedigrees. Like clowns at a masked ball removing their masks, folks like Rick Reuschel, Larry Milbourne, Aurelio Rodriguez and Jerry Mumphrey began resembling the lowly Cubs, Mariners, Senators and Padres they once had been.

Unable to reason clearly in the heat of big innings, manager Bob Lemon froze at the switch. He was torn between his own ingrained baseball judgment and that of the boss looking over his shoulder. The Yankee manager became a monster with two heads and no brain named Lemonbrenner; never in memory has a Series had a yellow sheet as long as Lemonbrenner's.

The glazed look of panic sometimes seen on football sidelines, with assistant coaches in earphones scampering everywhere and doing nothing, eventually gripped the Yankees. It took the form not of pandemonium but of blank-faced disbelief. When icy Tommy John was yanked in the fourth inning of a 1-1 tie in the last game (his series ERA at that moment 0.69), his face was a portrait of stupefied anger. As John's poise crumbled in curses, the Yankees' characteristic cool pro-



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Photographed at Whistler Mountain, British Columbia, Canada.

fessionalism died with it. Seven Dodger runs in the next two innings had the finality of a "Q.E.D." at the end of a geometry proof.

Even Winfield, perhaps the best natural athlete in his sport, became a parody of a player in full choke; by gritting his teeth with gridiron intensity, he became completely useless. On one final-game popup swing, Winfield found himself knocked flat in the dirt as though he'd been punched by The Invisible Man.

Of course, that invisible man was Steinbrenner, who had drained all pleasure from the playing of the game and replaced it with earnest tension.

This drift toward angst goes beyond Steinbrenner. Too many in baseball are learning that football expression: "Put on your game face." Baseball is rarely played at its best unless it is an immediate pleasure to the performers. From Ruth to Mays to Rose to Brett to Valenzuela, the thread that runs through the game's best players is a tough but still light-at-heart enthusiasm that would seem out of place in a football huddle.

Nonetheless, the opposite theory of baseball, perfected by that brilliant psychotic Ty Cobb and practiced by Billy Martin, suggests the game can be played as guerrilla warfare. In this Year of the Clenched Jaw, Martin taught his Oakland A's the virtue of baseball vice. They called it Billyball.

Maybe only a team like New York, which had been exposed to Martin, could be so successfully indifferent to his tactics. No, not double steals, suicide squeezes and other niceties designed to unnerve opponents. What really unsettles Oakland's foes are their outlaw gambits: greaseballs, scuffballs, beanballs, high-spikes slides, obscene bench jockeying, field-filling brawls, corked bats, hotdogging and—the A's trademark—perpetual stylin' and stallin'.

It was a playoff pleasure to watch the A's crumble in a three-act play of self-exposure. In their first loss, Cliff Johnson knocked out hyper reliever Ron Davis by stalling for eight minutes in one obnoxious at-bat. Davis got so furious he couldn't come within a foot of the plate. The Yank antidote was reliever Goose Gossage who said, "I spent last night anticipating Billy's little tricks. I wouldn't put anything past him."

In the next game, Martin, an unsurpassed heat-of-battle tactician, blew his cool by going against standard operating procedure twice in a seven-run Yankee fourth inning. First, he gave

the quick hook to ERA champion Steve McCatty while he still had a 3-2 lead. Then he refused to give Lou Piniella the compliment of an intentional walk because the two are feuding. Piniella hit a three-run homer. Those textbook examples of overmanaging unnerved the young A's, who were outscored 16-0 over the last 14 innings of the series sweep.

By the final game, the A's were so tight, so out of sync with the spirit of their sport, that both Rickey Henderson and Dwayne Murphy disabled themselves while merely swinging at pitches.

The tendency toward dawdling—"stylin'"—has been growing for years, as players are tempted to believe they're as important as their salaries. The A's have turned it into an abysmal art form.

"Guys, after one decent season, make an epic out of getting into the batter's box," says Baltimore coach Ray Miller. "If Rickey Henderson, Mike Hargrove, Disco Dan Ford or Carlton Fisk ever leads the league in hitting, we'll never finish another game. They'll have to turn off the stadium lights and turn on a spotlight as each guy comes to the plate."

For eons, baseball was a two-hour game. Each decade, the pace has slowed. The infuriating A's, however, made the latest quantum leap, averaging 2:55 per game. Can the age of the three-hour football-length game for every team be far away?

The player with an inflated opinion of himself who between every pitch will step out, call time, adjust his batting glove, re-dig a hole for his back foot, adjust 12 parts of his uniform and anatomy, then imperiously signal to the umpire that he is ready to proceed, will show himself in other ways.

He will, if he is Garry Templeton of St. Louis (salary, \$690,000 a year), make indecent gestures to his home fans if they have the impertinence to boo him for loafing to first base.

He will, if he is Steve Carlton of Philadelphia (\$800,000 a year), refuse to speak in any public forum for years at a time, since he's indifferent to whether the fans who cheer him and provide his pay get to share what he thinks and feels.

He will, if he is Dave Parker of Pittsburgh (\$1 million a year), gain 30 pounds until he looks like a Parker roll so that he can chastise his team for not treating him respectfully and teach his critics in the grandstands a lesson for throwing debris at him. And so on.

Multi-year, multi-million-dollar malingers aren't as commonplace as resentful owners maintain. The player who's made it to the top in baseball's meritocracy is, by athletic natural selection, an overachiever. Nevertheless, bad apples seem easier to spot in the barrel now than they were five years ago.

Reggie Jackson once talked about "the magnitude of being me," and the burdens attendant on such a responsibility. A more common case is The Importance of Being Us. Most players can still get their hats on, but plenty of teams have the collective big head.

To wit, the ex-world champion Phillies. For several years, the Phils, with some exceptions like Rose, Tug McGraw and Mike Schmidt, have adopted an attitude that they're important fellows doing vital world work who shouldn't have to brook any nagging criticisms. Supercilious in defeat, vain in victory, the Phillies make themselves hard to like.

How hard?

Hard enough that manager Dallas Green quit his job after a tolerably successful season to become GM of the Chicago Cubs. Green couldn't wait to get in his final licks, either. On the morning of their fifth and final mini-series playoff game against Montreal, the Phillies awoke to discover that Green had laid the wood to them—in toto and at length—in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*. "A lot of these guys think they're real human beings, but they aren't," said Green in a memorable managerial sendoff to a team facing its biggest game of the year. The Phillies lost.

Much of what is worst in baseball commanded center stage this season. It would take the compassion of Albert Schweitzer to summarize this lost season in cheerful tones. We can only wish to forget quickly:

■ Ray Grebey, Bowie Kuhn and Marvin Miller. Hang 'em all up by their thumbs—especially Grebey, who did what the owners hired him to do: cause a strike. Only Grebey seemed to relish the strike and his sudden notoriety. It was his show and he enjoyed it too much. Given his druthers, Grebey would have preferred that the strike last till Christmas. It was neither his money nor his game.

■ The split season. The vote of one club—Montreal—brought into being the second season and the eight-team playoffs. "It came down to us, we were the pivotal vote," said Expo president John McHale. "We're traditionalists and firmly opposed to the plan. But

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we didn't want to thwart the will of the majority, so we went along." Rebutted Cincinnati president Dick Wagner, "That's why you have minorities. So they can stop the majority from doing stupid things."

■ The hilarious Integrity Question. A trivia question in the twenty-first century will be: In 1981, if the same team had won both halves of the season, its wild-card opponent would have been: A) the second-place second-half team, B) the second-place first-half team, C) the team with the next-best full-season percentage, D) the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, or E) a team of fixers chosen by Tony ("We'll forfeit if we have to") LaRussa and Whitey ("Me, too") Herzog. For bonus points, outline 12 playoff plans better than the one that was adopted.

■ The Kuhn system of temperature conversion, discovered by reporter Dan Shaughnessy. Question: When the temperature in Montreal on November 1 for the last game of the World Series is 0° Centigrade and 32° Fahrenheit, what is the temperature in degrees Kuhn? Answer: The postseason is always 72° Bowie.

Despite all of this year's dross, the game's tradition of decency and good spirits was visible below the shabby surface. The best folks and most ap-

# The first ultra

peeling teams seemed to be in the wings, acquitting themselves adequately, but waiting for a more seemly setting before stepping forward. Like, perhaps, 1982.

For instance, Herzog was the NL manager of the year for bringing home the Cardinals (who didn't make the playoffs) with the best full-season record in the NL East and the third-best overall record in baseball. However, Herzog could have won the award the day he dragged Templeton off the field and suspended him. "Everybody's so afraid they'll get sued that they get petrified," said Herzog. "We can't get too scared to do what's right. What Garry did was typical of the sort of thing that's tolerated in our society. But I'm not tolerating it here."

Milwaukee, strengthened by a trade that brought Pete Vuckovich, Ted Simmons and Cy Young reliever Rolie Fingers, rallied from 0-2 to force a fifth game in its playoff with the Yankees. That was a fitting reward for Brewer team builder Harry Dalton, who was fined \$50,000 by Grebey's player relations committee for these voice-of-reason words before the strike: "I hope that management is really looking for a compromise and not a 'victory.' I hope we're not about to witness another macho test of

wills." The price for telling the truth, and being right, can't get much higher.

The most refreshing moment of this season didn't even take place in the United States. On the final day of the National League season in a stadium built for an Olympics, a Mexican pitcher on a team with a Spanish name took on the entire nation of Canada in a thoroughly American game played before a crowd of French-speaking fans to see who would get to play a team called the Yankees in the World Series.

The innocence of the 20-year-old Valenzuela facing the 13-season-old Expos in a park full of gleeful, undemanding novice baseball fanatics who kept singing "The Happy Wanderer," ("Vol-der-eee, Vol-der-aaaah") in full-throated harmony, was in many ways the highlight of the season.

To an enlightened American, few things are more depressing than Montreal in general and Olympic Stadium in particular. It's everything many of us wish an American city and crowd would be—stylish, intelligent, civil and spontaneously jubilant. Wandering through the cavernous beer gardens, restaurants and shops of Olympic Stadium, it was impossible not to wonder how 50,000 people from a fairly broad cross-section of the city's so-

ciety could have such a ball together without any hint of friction. Everybody was laughing, singing, cheering and flirting, but nobody was drunk or stoned. Everybody was friendly, like a gigantic family. Nobody ran on the field. Nobody booed or chanted. Nobody complained. My true American gut reaction was, "Something's terribly wrong with these people."

When that fifth game was postponed until Monday—a work day when thousands of these people would have to give away their expensive tickets or throw them away—not a boo could be heard. The remaining 30,000 souls just quietly walked out and rode their spanking-clean subway back home. No wonder economists say Montreal is a dying city and predict its doom. The place is too good to exist.

The next afternoon, with sleet before the game, a raw mist occasionally hanging in the air and snow on the way, Valenzuela kept sticking his left hand in his hip pocket. Probably to make sure the Expos were still there. They were. Valenzuela won 2-1. The Dodgers were in the Series.

It's a lovely baseball paradox that this season of corroding seriousness should also prove to be The Year of Fernando. It's as though this child of burgeoning myth with the Ruthian

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physique and the 1,000-year-old Buddha face were sent to remind the game of its true purposes and the source of its power. His chubby face always wore an expression of wry amusement and his strange, slow, utterly confident sea-shanty of a walk seemed agelessly sage.

At every stage of the Dodger championship odyssey, Valenzuela was there. In the first six weeks, when a fast start cinched a playoff spot, Valenzuela had the best start of any rookie in history—eight consecutive complete-game victories with five shutouts and a 0.50 ERA. More important, his ebullient presence seemed to change the tone of the whole Dodger clubhouse as he took the weight off an aging, oft-disappointed team and carried it lightly.

On a club that knew itself and its limits almost too well, Valenzuela was as welcome as an unsullied horizon. The name on his jersey was "Possibility." Wherever he was, there Dodger spirits were lifted.

For example, in early May in Montreal, Valenzuela took his first Canadian batting practice. The pitcher was manager Tommy Lasorda. On the first pitch, Lasorda mustered what was left of his 53-year-old fastball and threw it precisely where he aimed it—right at the rookie's head.

Valenzuela hit the dirt.

"Hey, Tommy, be careful. That kid's your ticket back on to the TV talk shows," said Ron Cey.

"We thought you'd lost your little black book with the numbers of all the talk show hosts," needled Davey Lopes.

"I've been on *Good Morning America* seven times," yelled back Lasorda. "I don't need to call anybody. All the biggies call me."

Lasorda threw the next pitch. And Valenzuela, with his little makeshift pitcher's hack, lofted a fly ball over the rightfield fence.

"Hey, Tommy," yelled Lopes, "you can burn that black book."

Valenzuela was the Dodgers' ticket back to the big time from day one. He blended perfectly with the Dodger veterans, particularly the stubby, dogged overachievers in the long-running L.A. infield—Garvey, Cey, Russell, Lopes and catcher Yeager. In 1974, 1977 and 1978, they had come up short of the world title; always, they'd lacked the indefinable something extra—that hint of destiny or mystique—that lets a team play through its dangerously contagious spells of nervousness and lost confidence.

Valenzuela, a seventh son from dirt-poor Etchoahuaquila, clearly had a corner on the destiny market.

In the final pennant-clinching victory over Montreal—the unprecedented fifth sudden-death, win-or-go-home victory for the Dodgers in the playoffs—Lasorda kept looking at the youngest player in the majors and thinking, "He can't lose. It's his year." Then, Lasorda added an Italian homily: "If you threw Fernando in the river, he'd swim out the other side with a fruit stand."

In the third game of the World Series, when the Dodgers caught their wind and began their brave reversal of their 1978 Series fate, it was Valenzuela again nailed to the mound with Lasorda unwilling to remove his ace. Never had Valenzuela been more superb than that balmy evening, winning 5-4 with as little stuff and as little control as he had ever taken to the mound.

"I did not feel the two earthquakes today," said Valenzuela slyly. "I thought they were tonight. Everything was shaking."

Ultimately, the World Series was won by the right team for the right reasons. While the Yankees played joylessly, trying to escape blame, the Dodgers played for the sake of the game itself, and for each other.

In the end, Yeager spoke for all of them. Long after the fulcrum 2-1 fifth game had swung to L.A. because Yeager had backed Pedro Guerrero's homer in the seventh off Ron Guidry with a blast of his own, the veteran catcher talked about the not-as-good-as-we-used-to-be, but better-than-ever Dodgers.

"We're all on that edge, gettin' too old, they say," said Yeager, still in full

uniform in a nearly empty dressing room two hours after the final pitch had been thrown. "But the older we get, the more we play for each other. Maybe that's maturity. As long as these guys are proud of me, the world can go to hell."

Only a few old Codgers were left: Yeager, who was co-MVP of the Series along with Cey and Guerrero. Rick Monday, whose ninth-inning homer in Montreal had broken a 1-1 tie, won the pennant and made October 19 a blue Monday on the Canadian calendar. Jay Johnstone, the Dodger DH (Designated Humorist) whose pinch-homer had ignited a comeback victory in Game Four. Reggie Smith, Lopes and Lasorda hung back, too, tasting the tang that stays in a clubhouse after a Series victory.

Yeager started the screaming: "Where the hell are my glasses that hit my damned home run?" And then Lasorda started hollering about how the legendary spectacles had already been taken to the Hall of Fame. Everybody bellowed in, Johnstone sarcastically offering Lopes a pine-tar rag for his slippery, error-plagued glove and Monday proposing toasts to all noble old Dodgers, such as he and Yeager, who knew how to hit clutch home runs.

Soon, the half-dozen men had created their own bedlam. They screamed until they were screamed out. They laughed senselessly until they were laughed out. In the end, they just sat there, tired and grinning like kids.

They still had to fly to New York for one final game.

Unlike the Yankees, they would play for fun—just like baseball always has been played.

And, with luck, will be again. ■

THOMAS BOSWELL covers baseball for The Washington Post.

## 1981: It was a frustrating year



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANTHONY NESTE



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Paddy Hickey photographed by Jim Vicari



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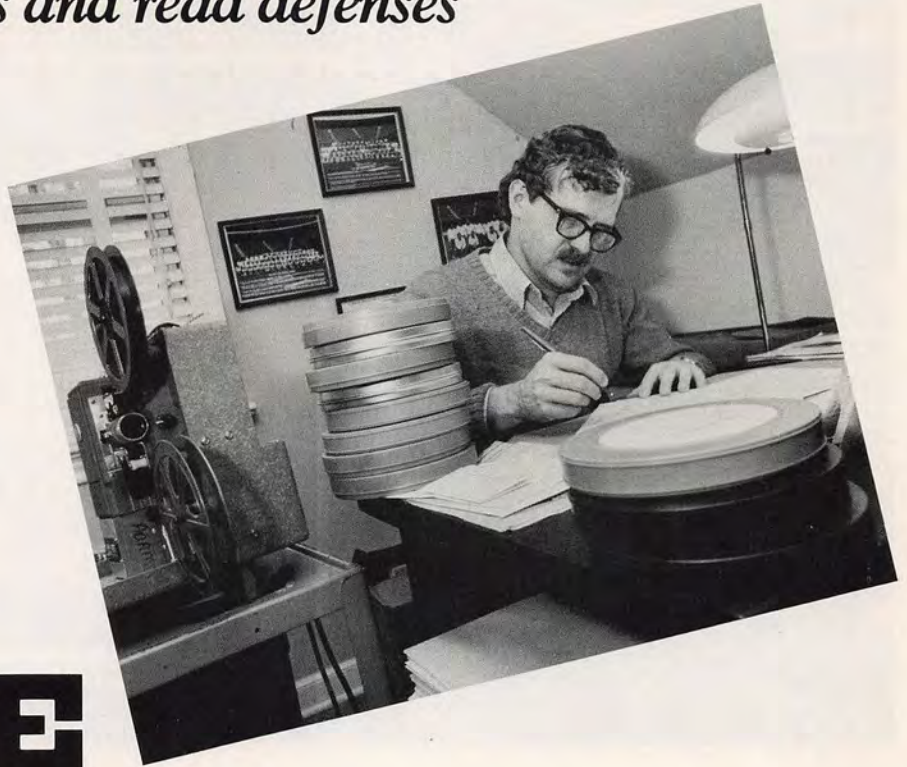


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*He never played college football,  
let alone pro, but now he's teaching Phil Simms  
how to pass and read defenses*



# THE UNLIKELY COACH

*By Steve Fiffer*

**I**T WAS WITH MORE THAN A little apprehension that Ernie Adams made arrangements for his mother Helen to see the New York Giants and the St. Louis Cardinals play football in Giants Stadium. Adams, an intelligent, proper young man of 28, who prepped at Phillips Academy in Andover and then graduated from Northwestern, knew the Giants had not enjoyed a winning season since 1972 and a trip to the playoffs since 1963. Therefore, he was worried that his mother might hear language she had never heard teaching school in Boston. "Don't try to engage the offenders in meaningful dialogue," he warned.

The Giants got their catcallers' tongues early, scoring on five consecutive possessions in the second and third quarters, as they routed the Car-

dinals 34-14. Helen Adams was spared.

The game's key play came with 31 seconds remaining in the first half. The Giants, leading 10-7, faced a second down and goal-to-go on the Cardinal seven-yard line. Quarterback Phil Simms signaled for a timeout, the team's last, and trotted off to discuss the situation with coach Ray Perkins. Perkins said something into the microphone on his headset, then looked to the heavens, or at least the press box, for guidance. "With no timeouts left, we can't afford a sack or even a completed pass short of the goal line," Ernie Adams said. "We have to throw into the end zone. Johnny Perkins is good at muscling free. I think the Z-K pattern might work here." Ray Perkins whispered something to Simms, who relayed the message to his team-



*Simms expected a wily veteran, but got Ernie Adams instead*

mates in the huddle. Then Simms dropped back and hit wide receiver Johnny Perkins, running a Z-K, in the end zone. The Giants had six more points and the affection of the crowd, which rose, applauding the imaginative game plan.

After the game, Adams took his mother to the Giants Stadium Club, a private dining room. He likes the cookies the club serves. A security guard asked to see identification. Adams pulled a purple tag from his pocket. The tag identified Ernie Adams not as a member of the Stadium Club, but as a member of the Giant coaching staff. Indeed, for the past three seasons, since age 26, he has been an offensive assistant with responsibility for the Giant quarterbacks, teaching everything from form and fundamentals to reading defenses. He is also Perkins' right-hand man and sounding board, intimately involved in the development of the Giant overall playbook, weekly game plan and rebuilding strategy. Most important, on Sundays he is the Giants' boy in the glass booth, hot-lined to Perkins, noting trends and recommending plays. His call for the Z-K pattern against

the Cardinals was not idle chatter.

The security guard can be forgiven. If there is a less likely coach in the NFL today than Ernie Adams, he is a better-kept secret than, well, than Ernie Adams. Adams not only never played professional football (about half of the league's 272 coaches did), he never even played college football, the only NFL coach who can make that claim. "Basically, as an athlete, I'm pretty untalented," he says.

He is the third youngest coach in the league. Green Bay's Dick Rehbein and Pittsburgh's Tony Dungy are two years younger. But Rehbein and Dungy are only first-year coaches.

So he's younger and less athletic than his fellow coaches. Does he at least look and carry himself like a coach? Hardly. For starters, he wears glasses. And with his thin mustache, haphazard hair and friendly stomach, he stands (or slumps) in sharp contrast to the clean, hard features of Perkins and the other Giant coaches. And, worst of all, he doesn't spit.

"Let's face it," says Scott Brunner, the Giant second-string quarterback, "Ernie is not your stereotype NFL coach. He doesn't look very impressive

or act like he just got out of the Marines." Brunner remembers their first meeting. Adams had come to the University of Delaware to evaluate him for the upcoming college draft. "I brought my dog to the practice field and she scared the hell out of Ernie. Then he ran me through some drills and left. I didn't even know he was a coach until I was drafted and reported to camp. I thought he was just some kid they'd sent out to scout."

Starting quarterback Phil Simms was similarly impressed on first meeting Adams. After the Giants selected him in the first round of the 1979 draft, Simms flew to New York from his Morehead State (Kentucky) campus to meet the press and the Giant staff. He was particularly eager to meet the quarterback coach. "I have to admit," Simms says, "I came expecting to find a wily veteran, a Y. A. Tittle type. And what did I find? Ernie Adams. I said to myself, 'Who the hell is Ernie Adams? And what the hell is he doing here?'"

THE HISTORY TEACHER WAS SURPRISED. The quiet, cherubic kid with the glasses who sat in the back of the room had seemed so absorbed, taking notes furiously every day. Yet he had not done well on the examination. The

teacher opened the boy's notebook. There was nothing remotely related to the course. Just page after page of 11 X's lined up against 11 O's and lots of squiggly lines.

Helen Adams was not surprised when the teacher called. Her son's adviser had already written to her on behalf of Andover: "I wish he would expand his horizons. His interest in football has assumed such proportions that it seems to be closing doors on other areas of endeavor." What was a mother to do?

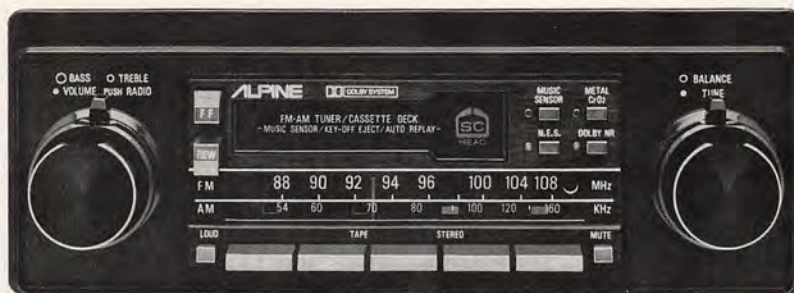
"Ernest was simply obsessed with football," Mrs. Adams says. He had wanted to be a coach ever since she could remember. By the time the teacher called, Adams was already attending coaching clinics and planning his senior project, an analysis of the play selection of the Andover football team on which he played guard.

Then there was his room, his corner of the rambling nineteenth century Brookline, Massachusetts, home in which he and his mother had lived alone since she had separated from his father. The room was filled with books, not atypical for a bright teenager—Adams had run the Latin department at school out of classes. But the "Bear" was Bryant, not Faulkner, and the other authors were Allen, Daugherty, Parseghian. "How-to" books on perimeter defense, coaching linebackers, the I-formation. By the time he was 17, Adams had read every coaching book he could get his hands on at least twice.

"I can't recall ever wanting to do anything but coach," Adams says. "I guess I was kind of a fanatic." Kind of? How many other high school seniors have ever made their college choice based on whether they could get major coaching experience while still undergraduates? Andover men are supposed to go to Ivy League schools. But the football programs at those institutions were not major enough. Adams might have been interested in Michigan. But with something like 18 graduate assistants hanging around Ann Arbor waiting for coaching opportunities, the prospects for involvement seemed nil. He finally selected Northwestern. The 1970 Wildcats had tied Michigan for second place in the Big 10, and head coach Alex Agase, named coach of the year in some polls, had responded to Adams' query with an open mind.

He spent his first year as a student manager, for a while lugging equipment for the freshman team. He presented Agase with a treatise on the

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drop-back passing attack. By his sophomore year, at age 19, Ernie Adams was Northwestern's chief scout, traveling the country to report on upcoming opponents and breaking down game films. By his senior year, he was coaching the junior varsity.

"He'd spend 60 hours a week in the coaching offices, studying films and picking our brains," remembers Jay Robertson, then a coach at Northwestern, now at Wisconsin. "In four years, I never saw him with a schoolbook."

THE BUS FROM BOSTON TO FOXBORO stopped several miles away from Schaefer Stadium, so the young man with the briefcase had to walk a good distance to get to work. He wasn't being paid, and very few of his superiors were at the office, but he made the trip every day. He was happy to have his foot in the door. He had talked to 28 organizations during his last year of college, and this was the only offer he had received.

Once at the office, he would take out his required reading: the New England Patriot playbook. When he tired of that, he would look at films. There were more coaching books in his room now and a collection of playbooks, too. Detroit Lion Offense 1971. St. Louis Cardinal Defense 1974. He read those at night, becoming a connoisseur of opponents' yearly strategies as another person might become a connoisseur of wines.

By the time the Patriot coaching staff had returned from a brief vacation, Adams was well versed in the team's system. By the beginning of the season, his duties ranged from remembering where the projector was to remembering what coverages to employ against certain formations. Soon he was attending meetings and analyzing films. He was 22 years old.

Over the next three seasons, he analyzed the tendencies of the Pats and their opponents. On game days, he was in the press box spotting trends. At halftime he would return to the locker room to present a large chart with data from the first two quarters. The Pats made the playoffs two of those years, and Adams earned nine game balls.

The Perkins-Adams ticket was forged at New England, where Perkins coached the receivers. Perkins eventually moved on to San Diego, and when he took the top job with the Giants after the 1978 season, Adams was the first person he hired. He had no qualms about working for Perkins, whom the New York press once nick-

named The Ayatollah. They had discovered they were on the same wavelength at New England and had talked about working together if Perkins became a head coach. "Ray is very demanding of himself and those who work for him," Adams says, "but it's unfair to call him a dictator. He's always open to suggestions." If Adams was unknown to the public, he was not unknown to those in the coaching ranks. "There are lots of people in the NFL who think Ernie has one of the best football minds to emerge in the last 20 years," says Bill Belichick, the Giant special teams-linebacker coach.

The job opportunity with the Giants meant that, for the first time, Adams would have specific coaching responsibilities: the quarterbacks. Could a 26-year-old with no playing experience earn the respect of and teach the high-priced man-children who populate the NFL? Granted, Adams was older and had more time in the league than some of his charges. But it is one thing to sit in the film room or even the press box analyzing tendencies; it is quite another to instruct first-round draft choices on throwing passes or reading defenses. It is even tougher when your personality is not exactly electric. At New England, some of the players had called Adams "Radar," after the character on *M\*A\*S\*H*. Television's Radar always seems to have the right answer when called upon, but he is a comical, almost sad case. Not the type to command a unit or even respect.

INDIAN SUMMER HAS YET TO MAKE A treaty with fall, and Phil Simms casts a giant shadow as he moves behind the center. He takes the snap, drops back and hits Earnest Gray, running a sideline route down the practice field.

"You're not dropping back like you should, Phil," a voice calls. Simms, who has already thrown 38 TD passes in his brief career and has dropped back more times than he chooses to count, spins and spots the speaker as quickly as he found his receiver. He looks at his pudgy critic and smiles. "Okay, Ernie."

Adams has never worried about his lack of playing experience. "Fifteen years ago, when the league was more like a fraternity, that might have mattered," he says. "But the pros today have the attitude, if the coach knows something and can help, that's great."

Similarly, his personality is not a concern. "You have to coach within your personality," he says. "Otherwise the players will see through you and never respect you. I can't be what I'm

not, and I'm not an emotional person." Another understatement from someone who says the angriest he ever got was when a librarian wouldn't let him check a book out of the adult section because he was only 11. "I didn't say anything, but I did tear up my card and drop it on her desk."

PRACTICE HAS BEEN OVER FOR HOURS. It's almost 10 o'clock as Adams leaves the Meadowlands for his nearby apartment. The quarters are almost as modest as their tenant: In one room a print of the Yale-Princeton game of 1890 and a Rockwell baseball vignette decorate the walls. A yard-high stack of unread *New York Timeses* rests against a chair. Coaching books and playbooks occupy several shelves, making only minor concessions to books on other subjects—investing in the stock market (a serious hobby pursued in the offseason) and Dumas Malone's monumental study of Thomas Jefferson. "I've read the first five volumes," Adams says, "and so far there's been nothing I can use on the football field. Tom doesn't seem to translate as well as Patton."

In another room, there is a projector and a stack of film cans. On this night, as almost every night, he will study films. As Perkins observes: "He spends 12–14 hours at the stadium, and who knows how late into the night he watches films and thinks football. He doesn't have a social life."

On the Saturday afternoon before the first Green Bay game—the only daylight hours he had off during the week—Adams went to the Cornell-Rutgers game. "Just for fun." He did not pull rank. He bought a ticket and sat in the stands with the rest of the fans. Later, he tried to explain why football means so much to him. He thought for several minutes before speaking, experiencing the same difficulty a man might when asked why he loves his wife. "I'm not sure," he finally said. "It's not the idea of the capital 'T' Team; I like working with the players, but I'm also very happy to be off by myself just thinking about the game. I guess it's the capital 'G' Game that grabs me. The intellectual challenge of working on a field that's 53½ yards by 100 yards, within a rigid set of rules and with a limited number of options, knowing that there are people on the other side of the stadium trying to do the same thing you're trying to do." ■

STEVE FIFFER is a freelance writer based in Chicago.

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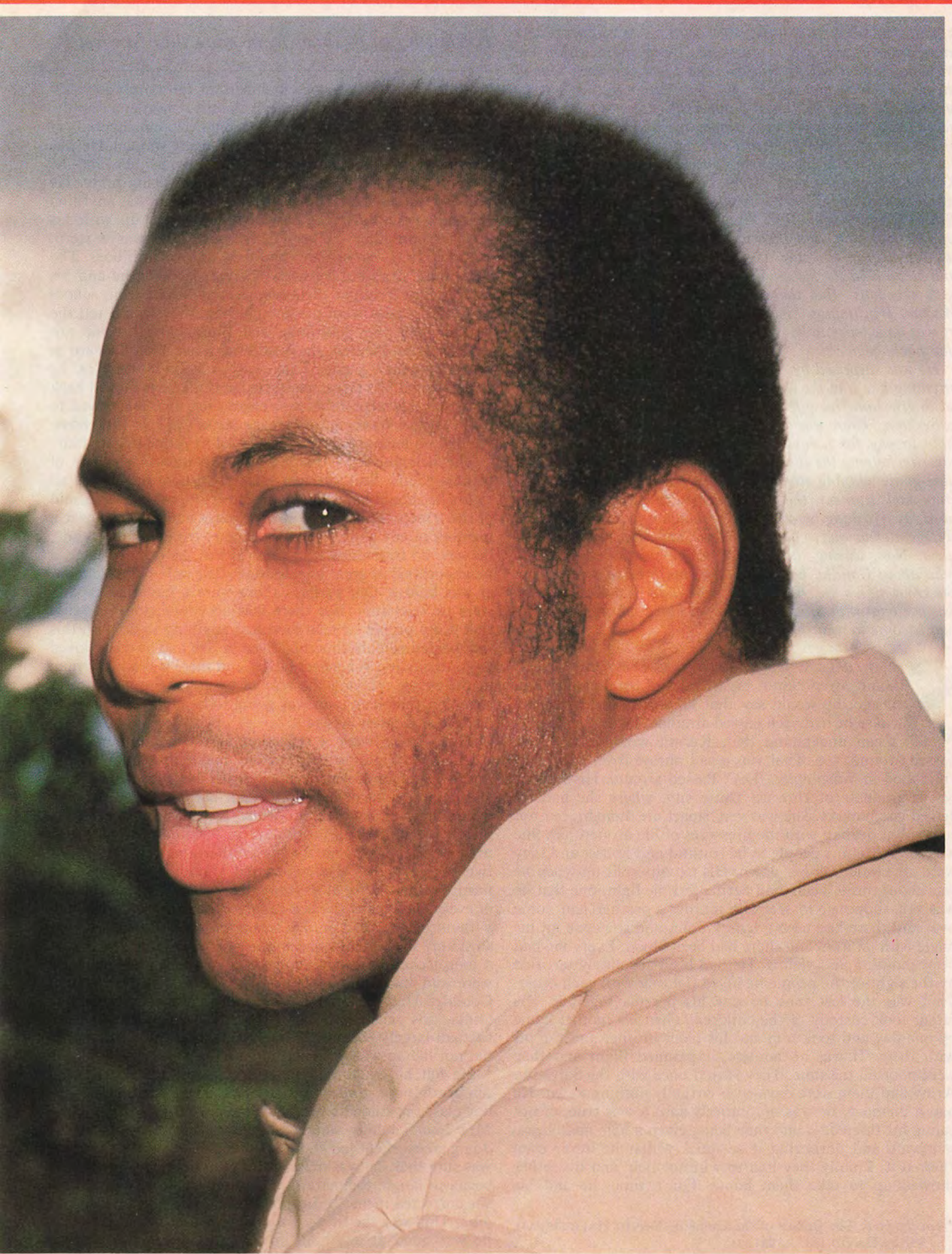
# IT'S NOT EASY BEING KERMIT WASHINGTON

*But even in today's NBA, hard work sometimes pays*

BY DAVID HALBERSTAM

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PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK HANAUER



KERMIT WASHINGTON HAD NOT LOOKED FORWARD TO THE move from San Diego to Portland. Every move within the National Basketball Association, and there had been four of them, was a major adjustment for his family. When he entered the league as a first-round draft choice of the Lakers, acceptance came slowly, even among his teammates. The wife of Jim Price told Washington's wife, Pat, that the two couples could never really socialize, because Jim was a starter and Kermit was on the bench. "After all, does the bank president socialize with the tellers?" she said. Later came the fight with Rudy Tomjanovich, and Washington was suspended and traded to Boston, and then to San Diego. There, because of the intensity of his play, the fury with which he rebounded and scrambled for loose balls, he became immensely popular with the fans. But the moment the Clippers signed Bill Walton, Washington knew with a melancholy certainty that he was gone, sure to be part of the commissioner's compensation package.

He was surprised by the Portland fans. He had never seen anything like it in the world of pro basketball. People competed to give him free gifts. Fans telephoned, volunteering to be babysitters. There was a free leased car. It was almost impossible to pay for a meal. He soon established himself as a favorite, helping the Blazers start the 1979-1980 season with a nine-game winning streak. But then the team began to lose. Only Jack Ramsay, the coach, seemed to take the defeats as hard as Washington. When Washington was younger, in college, defeat was so painful that he had come down with an ulcer. Now, during the Blazers' losing streak, he began to read about Gandhi, hoping to take comfort and solace from the great man's life. For defeat, more than with most players, was personal with him; it transported him back from what he had become to what he had been.

SOMETIMES WHEN KERMIT WASHINGTON TALKED about Swen Nater, his friend and teammate in San Diego, he would say that he understood Swen because he had been passed around a lot as a little boy. I can understand that, Kermit would say, I was passed around, too. That was a sad phrase from a difficult childhood in Washington, D.C. Passed around. His mother was a graduate of Howard University, where she had received good marks. She was very smart, he thought, but not so good at dealing with the pressures of life around her. She was always telling people to be truthful and honest and they were always letting her down. His parents split up when he was about three. There had been a terrible fight, one that he was not supposed to see. His mother's brother had come over and there had been a family fight, and someone hit his uncle with an iron, and there had been blood. Everyone had been shouting and yelling. He had been absolutely terrified by the sight of the people he loved fighting with each other. That was the last time he saw his parents together. His father took custody of the children. Then his mother came by one day and took him and his older brother and ran off with them. It was an aimless, ill-planned flight and they were poor all the time. They stayed once with the Salvation Army and there were days with virtually nothing to eat. He had a memory, he was not entirely sure it was true, of not eating for three days and then being given a ham and cheese sandwich and devouring it so quickly that he never even chewed it. Finally they had to wire for help and his father showed up to take them home. For a time, he and his

## *Kermit hated to shoot from more than six feet*

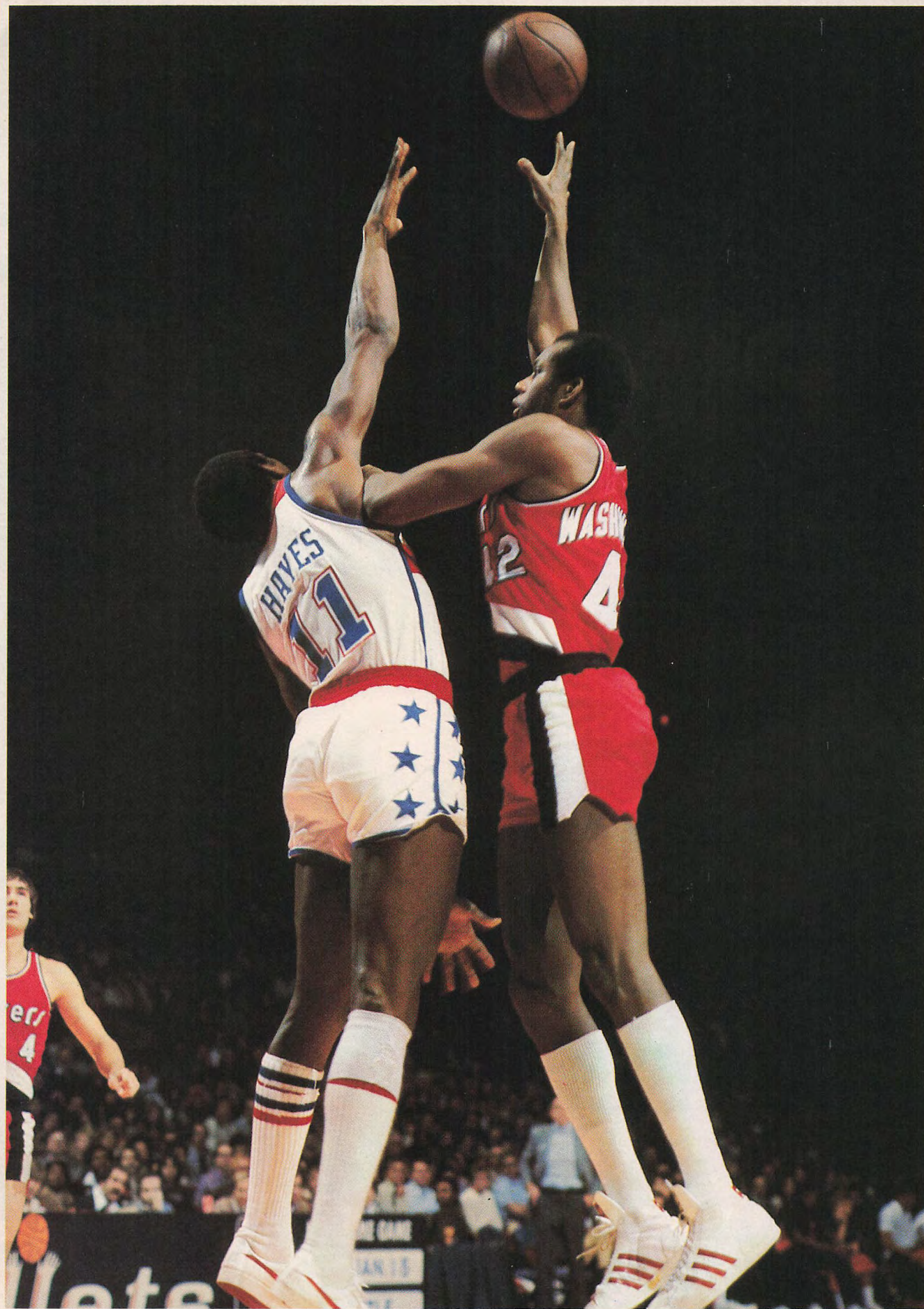
brother lived with various members of the family—grandparents, aunts, uncles, father's family, mother's family, changing homes. There was a feeling, he remembered, of never really belonging, of perhaps not being wanted. He was convinced that the fault must somehow be his, and he became terribly shy, quiet to the point of being mute. He said as little as he could because he was afraid that anything he said might be wrong. Finally they ended up with his great-grandmother on his father's side. She was a stern, strict old lady, but she also had time to love both boys. The rules were strict but he knew she cared. When he and his brother Eric brought their report cards home from school and their grades were predictably bad, they would tell the old lady that they had done well. She, after all, could not read or write. Pleased, she would mark her X on the card in the appropriate place. That was as good a time as he remembered. His father remarried and the boys moved back with him; his stepmother was clearly less than overjoyed to find that the Washington ménage contained two little boys. He had no memory, as a little boy, of anyone hugging him.


The neighborhood that he grew up in was just shy of being a ghetto. Still, his area was not without danger; by all rights he should have been a street person, but he was afraid of the streets. There were always gangs and he was never a member of any gang. When the chance came to join a gang, he was too frightened to take it. It was, he decided later, a neighborhood of great hopelessness. The only real role model was failure. Oh, perhaps there were a few black sports stars on television. But there was no connection, no sense that those people on television had anything to do with this sad, beaten neighborhood he lived in. He had as a boy loved to go to movies. Whenever he did and there was a black man in the movie, playing the role of a soldier, he was always sure that the black man was going to be among the first to die. He was rarely wrong.

The schools were a reflection of the community. The teachers were, almost to a person, unable to help. They did not, Washington later decided, really believe that a black child could achieve anything. What had happened to them would happen to their students. Kermit Washington remembered himself in those days as a skinny awkward boy without friends, except for his brother and perhaps one or two other buddies. He considered himself a poor student, unsure of his ability at anything. He was relieved at the end of every class when the bell rang and he had gotten through without being called on. He was not a good athlete. He was so skinny that even in the summer he wore long sleeves and a long jacket so that no one would see how thin his arms were and make fun of him. In his senior year at Calvin Coolidge High he was about 6-4 and perhaps 150 pounds. Other kids called him The Blade. He played some school football largely because he had a friend on the team and he did not like to walk home at night alone.

He felt he could not do well at anything. He received uniformly poor grades in all classes. Then one day in biology class the students were dissecting frogs and the teacher, Mrs. Joan Thomas, watched him and said, "Kermit, you're doing an excellent job." He was terribly embarrassed and he was sure that she was making fun of him. All the other kids began to laugh, too, sure that she was mocking him. "No," she corrected them, "I mean it. Kermit is doing an excellent job." That was the first time anyone had ever told him that he was good at anything in his entire life. With that he began to feel confident in biology and he began to study and

From the book *The Breaks of the Game* by DAVID HALBERSTAM  
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A large pineapple is the central focus, with its top and bottom removed, leaving a hollowed-out center. To the left of the pineapple is a half of a coconut, showing the white flesh and brown husk. The background is dark, and the foreground is a reddish-brown surface.

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get good marks. Soon he had good marks in biology and poor marks in everything else. Then Mrs. Thomas became his homeroom teacher and she looked at his report card and told him that he ought to try to do better in other courses, too. "You know, Kermit," she said, "you're intelligent and you could get good marks if you wanted to." He was stunned by that, by the idea that she thought he was intelligent. In his last year at Calvin Coolidge he made the honor roll. He was very proud of that.

Yet it seemed unlikely that he would be able to go to college. Not many poor black graduates of Washington's school system went to college unless they were either superb athletes or superb students. He was neither. In his senior year he had played on the basketball team but had not even started, and he had averaged perhaps four points a game. Then his stepmother made it very clear that when he graduated he was supposed to move out. Suddenly, he wanted to go to college. But he had no money. His brother Eric had won a football scholarship (he later played for the St. Louis Cardinals), so he decided he'd better win one, too. He was too skinny for football. But he was tall, so he decided that basketball would have to be his sport.

Almost overnight, with the season virtually gone, he began to practice three hours a day. Then he heard of an all-star game for Washington players. Those chosen would compete against another all-star team from Pennsylvania. Everyone in playground basketball, which was big in Washington, knew about it, and only the best players were even invited to try out. Half terrified by the audacity of what he was doing, Kermit Washington, not even a starter at Coolidge, showed up for the tryouts. At first the officials were not even going to let him compete because he had not been invited. But he talked his way into the competition and as soon as he did he regretted it. He had made a fool of himself, he was sure, coming here to play against the best players in the city; they were all much better than he was. The gym was almost empty except for lots of quite snappily dressed white men, recruiters. Among them was a young man named Tom Young who had been an assistant at Maryland, where the teams were always big time, and who had just taken a job as head coach at American University, a weak school in basketball. The kids he could have recruited in the past for Maryland, the superstars, were now beyond his reach, and he would have to take what he could get. Young was, in his own words, working the scrap heap. But he noticed one young player, not very good, almost bad, in fact, skinny and terribly unsure of himself, with no instinct for the game. But very quick, and tall and eager. So desperately eager that he dove for every loose ball. Young continued to watch him and he noticed another quality: The people who ran this tryout were treating the boy very badly and yet the boy never complained. So Young, who could not be choosy, and who saw something in the boy that he could not even describe, decided to offer him a scholarship to American. Forty kids try out, he thought, and I get the worst one.

So Kermit Washington thought he was lucky in the fall and Tom Young thought *he* was lucky, because over the summer Kermit Washington grew four more inches. He arrived as a freshman, skinny as ever, still very quick, determined to build himself up. He lifted weights every day, right up until basketball practice; each night, before he went to bed, he put on a weight vest and ran up the seven flights of steps in his dorm several dozen times, building up his wind. No one, he decided, would be stronger or in better condition. Tom Young told him to lift weights only three days a week but he refused. "Coach, I'm not good enough to

play unless I'm in better shape. Otherwise we can both forget it." In his freshman year, playing against the varsity, the older, heavier players beat on him in what was almost a personal manner. Joe Boylan, the freshman coach, wanted to stop it, there was clear personal animosity there, but Young said no, Washington would have to learn to take it, things would get rougher in real games.

At the beginning of his college years he was shy and retiring. College changed him. Later he decided his life could be divided into two parts—the part before college, and the rest. He met his wife-to-be, Pat, when he was a freshman; she seemed smarter and more confident than any young woman he had ever known. She had watched him in a freshman basketball game and he had caught her attention by scoring four straight points for the wrong team, two when he had tipped the ball into the wrong basket and then, after the referee had lined them up the wrong way, two more. She thought he was very cute and tried to talk to him afterwards, but he was the shyest boy she had ever met. Finally she started going out with another member of the basketball team in order to be near him, but that didn't work. Next she forced her roommate to go out with *his* roommate, and thus she could go to his room. But even then he wouldn't talk to her, he simply sat there, reading a book. She realized that somewhere someone had beaten him down and had convinced him that he had nothing to say, nothing worth listening to. She wondered how the two of them could be so different; they were both black, her parents were hardly wealthy or even middle-class, her father had a simple job in the New York welfare department, but hers was a strong family with an absolute determination that she and her sister, who later went to Harvard Medical School, would go to college. She had been brought up absolutely sure of her place at school, her right to be there. He by contrast was terribly unsure, as if terrified that someday they would find out about him, a whistle would be blown and he would have to leave this haven and return whence he came. But there was something touching about him, his curiosity about everything, his desire to study. At night she would go with him to the playground and he would shoot and she would retrieve the ball until the lights were out and it was too dark and then they would go back to study. They would walk through the pleasant white middle-class section of Washington in which American University was located, and he would talk about how one day, if they worked hard, they might own a house like one of these.

He began to be more confident. He did better in school. Pat helped him there; she was a good student. When he went home to his old neighborhood during the summer his friends teased him. "Kermit, what's happened to you? You beginning to talk like a white person now, man." He knew he was changing, he did not think it was a bad thing to change, to want to be better. He began to become a better basketball player, too. His body filled out and he continued to build himself up. But in his first two years he remained something of a soft player. He was not aggressive enough. Then, working in the weight room at American, he met a graduate student named Tray Coleman, a former football star at the University of Nebraska, who was just a little too small to play in the pros, but who looked like a walking body-building advertisement. They had, by pumping iron together in the weight room, shared sweat, shared grunts, become good friends. Coleman began to push Kermit Washington: He was a good player but not good enough, he was not aggressive enough and because of that he was not going to make the pros. "Kermit, you are not a stylish player," he said, "and you are not that big. So you'd better be more

aggressive." "But Tray," Washington had answered, "I'm not an aggressive person. I can't be what I'm not." "Kermit," Coleman had answered, "you are black. Very black. Look at yourself if you don't believe me. That's handicap enough. You don't have to worry about adding any more handicaps. You've got the biggest one there is. So you'd better be aggressive." Washington had protested that it wasn't him. "Listen, boy," Coleman said, "you'd better not be afraid to act hungry because you *are* hungry. There's a lot of blacks that feel they have to act cool. That's because they're afraid they might fail. It's all right in this world to act hungry. White people do it all the time." So he gradually became more aggressive, and as Coleman had predicted, it became part of his game. He became, in a somewhat better-than-average college circuit, a great college player, intense, quick, an excellent rebounder. At the end of his junior year he was drafted by the New York Nets of the ABA. They offered him a five-year contract at roughly \$100,000 a year to leave school and play for them. Half a million dollars! But American had saved him, and he owed it something. He turned the offer down. Later that day Tom Young, the coach, simply hugged him. Kermit Washington had never felt better about himself.

By his senior year he was one of the best players in the country. He would read almost with disbelief stories in *The Washington Post* about coaches of opposing teams and how they were planning to stop Kermit Washington. *Kermit Washington*, that was him. For the last two years he led the nation in rebounding. In the last game of his senior year he was on the edge of becoming only the seventh player in the country to average 20 points and 20 rebounds for his entire college career. He had to make 39 points to do it and he had never been a great scorer. He was so nervous the night before that he could not sleep at all. On the day of the game he could not eat, and when the crowd, the largest in history at American, started cheering as he was introduced, he could barely walk. That night he scored 40 points. He was also an academic all-American. In his senior year he taught courses in the social sciences. It was a life which just a few years earlier he could never have envisioned. A few weeks later he was made the first-round draft choice of the Los Angeles Lakers, chosen No. 5 in the whole country.

The year before that, in Wilt Chamberlain's last season, Los Angeles had come close to winning the championship, and the Lakers were now sure that they had a strong team, particularly in the front court. There was no place for Washington to break in. In college he had played center, and he had been big enough and strong enough and above all quick enough to play against other centers. Bigger men were almost always slower. But he had been drafted to play forward, and he was, in addition, unprepared for the difficult transition from college star to pro. College star after college star had been destroyed by failure to make the adjustment. Most had, after all, almost always been the strongest players on the court, first in high school, then in college, and had never bothered to develop more subtle skills, because those skills had not been needed. Few coaches, moreover, had much interest in broadening a player's game. Strength was enough. Then, overnight, the player arrived in the professional game where everyone else was strong and everyone was big and everyone was quick. He might well have had a no-cut contract, but he almost certainly found himself playing out of position. College centers play with their backs to the basket and their offensive moves are simple, one quick fake and a spin; professional forwards *face* the basket from a greater distance and they have to move without the ball and to put the ball on the floor in

order to play their position correctly. Similarly, those deft and graceful in college, successful because they were so good at the ballet of basketball, now needed to add power and strength to their game. What made it even more difficult was the fact that there is virtually no individual coaching and teaching in the NBA. There is an assumption that a player arrives in the league in full possession of all the basic skills. Either that or he sinks.

For a long time, Kermit Washington sank. He had been told in advance that he would play very little in his rookie year, but like all rookies he had not believed this. He had played in only half the games, averaging only 10 minutes a game at that. What was worse, in the second year things did not improve very much. He was playing some backup center and some power forward, and it was clear that if he had any future in the league it was at power forward. But he was awkward there. He had no sense of the game. Now, for the first time in three years, he became frightened of failing. Bill Sharman was the coach and Washington went up to Sharman and asked him to teach him the game. But Sharman, harassed by pressures beyond his control, worried about his own position in the organization, had little time for instruction. The third season was even more disappointing. He knew now that the Laker front office thought he was a writeoff, a failure; worse, they had concluded that there was nothing wrong with his body, and therefore he was dumb. He had, by painfully hard work, become someone in his life and now they were taking it away again. There had been one game against Golden State when he bounced off Rick Barry, fouling Barry clumsily, and Barry—who had little tolerance for fools—had turned to him angrily and said, "Listen, you better learn how to play this game." That had stung. He stayed up late that night seeing the play, hearing Barry's words, seeing not the anger on his face but the contempt, all of it made much worse because he knew that Barry was absolutely right: He had better learn to play the game.

By the end of that third year he was desperate. It was not the money that was at stake, his contract was good; it was his sense of self, so laboriously put together and, he realized, so precarious. He waited until the season ended and then, in desperation, he went to Pete Newell, a former college and professional coach, then with the Lakers in a peripheral capacity, and asked if Newell would teach him to play forward. He was terrified about asking, he barely knew Newell, but he had always heard what a great coach he was. He was afraid that Newell would mistake his request, think that he was trying to gain points in the organization or get a better contract, or simply that he was too pushy. But the alternative was too grim. Newell in turn was astonished. In recent experience, no player in the league seemed willing to admit that he still had something to learn. "Why do you want to take lessons?" he had asked. "Because I want to play like Paul Silas," Washington had answered, which was good enough; Paul Silas was an example of the best of the NBA players, a triumph of character and intelligence over the lack of pure athletic skill.

So Newell was intrigued by the request, and he said, yes, they would meet, at 7 a.m. He was sure the hour would put Washington off. It did not. The first few weeks were terrible. Pete Newell was, in most human situations, an absolute gentleman, intelligent, soft-spoken, his clothes and manner more that of an Ivy League professor than of a basketball coach; but in the privacy of the gym, he was radically different, tough, demanding, the coach as drill sergeant. He was even tougher than usual with Kermit Washington; if he was going to take on a charity project he wanted to be absolutely sure that the project was worth accepting. Each

day when Washington came home he was unable to walk for two or three hours. At the end of those two weeks Pete Newell decided that Washington had a chance to be an even better player than Paul Silas. He was a slightly better jumper, and he was quicker. So they began special tutorials for a professional player making \$100,000 a year. These were the kinds of drills Newell usually gave to 17-year-old college freshmen, on footwork, on balance, on moving the feet, keeping the hands in the air.

They were an odd couple, the old gray-haired man pushing the young black player. Newell told Washington to study the book on Silas, take film clips of his games home and memorize them. All that summer they worked long sessions together two and three times a week, and in the end Pete Newell thought he had a player. He began to tell Washington to take jump shots, not because he was a particularly good shooter, but because he needed to be able to score and, even more important, he had to believe that he could. Forwards have to have small jump shots. Not great ones. But acceptable ones. In the beginning Kermit Washington was terrible. Gradually he became a competent shot. He still hated to shoot from more than six feet away, as if he regarded shooting as uncharitable.

The lessons changed him. For the first time he understood his position and what was expected of him. At the start of the 1976 season he was a different player. By now Kareem had become the Los Angeles center and Washington was the ideal forward to play alongside him; Kareem was a great shooter and a good rebounder, but not that physical; Washington was not a good shooter, but he was a fine rebounder, and he was a physical player. For the first time in his professional career he was playing with confidence, averaging nearly 10 rebounds a game. That was the year in which Portland went on to win the championship, but during the regular season Los Angeles played Portland three times, with Kermit Washington in the lineup, and won three times. Suddenly basketball was fun again. Then in the 54th game of the season Kermit Washington's leg went out. There had, of course, been plenty of warning—athletes' bodies usually give repeated signals—but in professional sports there is a tendency to ignore the warnings. Washington had been feeling pain in his knee for weeks; he would put heating pads on his knees before a game, and ice on them after, and he took a lot of bute, the anti-inflammatory drug that dealt with the pain but not with the problem. He knew he was taking a risk in using the bute, that he was in effect killing not the cause but simply the body's warning to him. He now had trouble walking after games and could not drive his car for more than five minutes at a time without getting out, in terrible pain, and stretching his legs. If he was walking down a decline, he had to angle his leg because he could not bend it properly. Moreover, the pain was not just in his knee, but went through his entire body and into his head, and he was gobbling aspirin before every game because the headaches were so bad. He knew that because of the pain he was changing as a person, becoming more irritable and edgy, less secure. He also knew what was wrong with him: He had tendinitis, jumper's knee. This was particularly unsettling, since his game was premised on one thing, his jumping ability.

Pat Washington was appalled by what was happening to him. "I can't understand why you're doing this, you're taking too much risk," she would say. But she had become, she knew, the outsider. He was the basketball player; he knew what was at stake. He refused to take himself out of a game, or to miss a game. One night the Lakers were playing Denver and he drove the baseline past Paul Silas. Silas never

touched him, but then Kermit Washington heard a terrible pop and he instantly knew what had happened. He went down as if shot. He had known pain all his life but he had never felt pain like this. He was absolutely out of control, rolling up and down the floor like a little kid. He finally looked down where his kneecap was supposed to be. It was no longer there. It had slipped over to one side, and where it was supposed to be there was simply a big dent. He had severed a patella tendon. It was as if someone had snipped the string that held his knee in alignment.

The season was over for him and, it turned out, for the Lakers as well. They iced his knee and operated on him at six o'clock the next morning. He was terrified that his career might be over; not many athletes make it back from so serious an injury. During the surgery and then in the days and weeks after it, the pain was beyond anything he could remember. When Pat Washington had brought his daughter Dana to visit him, she had frolicked on the bed. Afterwards he had been forced to tell Pat that much as he loved his daughter, Dana should not come next time, the pain was too great. The doctors told him he probably would not be able to play basketball again. He fell into a deep depression; when the Lakers made the playoffs he could not bring himself to attend the games.

This time it was Pete Newell who pushed Washington, insisting that he not quit, that he try to play again. The leg was almost atrophied from the injury. Washington was not even sure he could bend it and run, but Newell was so single-minded that he dared not slack off. It was as if Newell were offering him a personal challenge. Every day he forced Washington to do more drills, to accept more stress on the leg. Each day he was sure he had to quit; he would come home and tell Pat that he did not think he could go back the next day, and the following day he returned. The worst thing about Newell was that he was acting as if Washington had never even hurt his leg. One day Newell introduced him to a sliding drill. Washington tried it and the pain took him right back to the moment of the original injury. "No way I'm going to do that," he told Pete Newell, "no way I'm going to do it, even for 45 seconds." "You're going to do it, and you're going to do it for 20 minutes, or your career is over," Newell said. So he stayed with it and gradually his leg came back and he was able to play again.

He played surprisingly well. He was, the doctors decided, a quick healer. Then on December 10, 1977, in the 24th game of the season, playing against Houston, he went up for a rebound against Kevin Kunnert of the Rockets. Kunnert had gotten the ball and Washington, as big men often do under the boards, used his arm to push off on Kunnert's jersey, in order to get some leverage and propel himself faster down the court. Kunnert, a very tough, physical player, threw two quick elbows. That surprised Washington, who thought they were friends, and he retaliated with a swing, and then Kareem grabbed Kunnert and Washington hit Kunnert and he went down. Then out of the corner of his eye, Kermit Washington saw a figure in a Rocket uniform rushing towards him and he swung as hard as he could. The uniform belonged to Rudy Tomjanovich.

Kermit Washington hit Rudy Tomjanovich as hard as he could right on the face, a punch doubled in impact by the fact that Tomjanovich was running towards Washington at the time. It was a terrifying moment. The impact of fist upon face sounded, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar said later, like a watermelon being dropped on concrete. Washington, 230 pounds, all muscle from many long hours in gyms, had smashed Tomjanovich's entire face, and come within millimeters of killing him. It was, the chief surgeon in charge of

putting him together remarked, like piecing together a shattered eggshell with Scotch tape. "I have seen many people with far less serious injuries not make it," the doctor said.

Washington ran through all of that moment over and over again, both in his mind and later in court. He had held Kunnert and tried to push off, coming off the boards. That was a foul, something you did every game, and tried to get away with. Kunnert had pushed back, a quick elbow and a punch—something confirmed by the film, by other Laker players, and even by Tomjanovich's teammate Robert Reid. Then he had swung and everything had gotten out of control. He remembered Tomjanovich simply as a blur in a uniform. It was a terrible thing, but it was not deliberate, it was a part of the frenzy of the game. The commissioner, Larry O'Brien, had already been worried about the growing number of fights and the potential for serious injury. He immediately suspended Washington and fined him \$10,000. This meant a loss of about \$60,000. He bore the burden of what he had done to Tomjanovich, and even worse, what he had almost done. He tried briefly to get in touch with the man he had maimed, with no success. Tomjanovich was in the hospital, first fighting for his life and then gradually undergoing a prolonged, difficult, delicate series of operations to rebuild his face. He wanted no part of Kermit Washington, his sympathy or his friendship.

Washington found that he had been judged and convicted, not just by the commissioner and by the media, but by the fans as well. All the years of effort he had devoted to gaining approval had been stripped away. The management of his team made no move to defend him, nor did anyone from the Lakers get in touch with him. Meanwhile the mail was the ugliest he had ever seen, hundreds of letters, all filled with racial epithets. He was shattered by the fact that people who did not know him could hate him so much. Pat was in the last month of pregnancy with their second child.

### *His game was premised on his jumping ability*



They felt completely alone. There was a question of whether Kermit would ever be able to play again. Larry Fleisher, the head of the Players' Association, called him to suggest that the association be allowed to protest O'Brien's decisions, the fine and the suspension. It was a clear violation of due process. It would never stand up in the courts, Fleisher said. But Washington wanted none of it, and Fleisher realized finally that Washington had been through too much already and he simply could not bear an additional replay in court. In the years that followed, Washington nevertheless became the center of a complicated legal action in which Tomjanovich sued the Lakers (and won some \$3 million in a Houston court); and he came to hate the law and all its works, even when they were directed against the Lakers; he hated what was implied, that he was some kind of animal, a monster the Lakers had failed to control properly. He never said so—he had become too wary and he knew his position was too vulnerable—but he believed that the entire legal action was in part racially motivated, that if it had been a white player hitting a white, or a black player hitting a black, there would have been less media fuss, a less energetic intervention by the commissioner, and less passion in the courtroom.

He felt a public enemy, a marked man. It was clear to him that the Lakers were finished with him. There had been one fight earlier in the year between Kareem and Kent Benson, a white center for Milwaukee. The Lakers had stood by Kareem but Washington was sure they were not about to do the same for a second black player involved in a fight with a white. As he waited, the only person he had any contact with was Pete Newell. One day Washington showed up at Newell's door with a huge color television set. With it was a small plaque that said, FOR COACH NEWELL. THANK YOU FOR MAKING ME A BETTER BASKETBALL PLAYER. KERMIT WASHINGTON.

A few weeks after that the Lakers traded him to Boston. Red Auerbach had always coveted him. Washington loved playing in Boston. He felt at home there. He had never seen an athlete like Dave Cowens before. In turn, Cowens loved playing alongside Washington. "It's great fun," Cowens said, "you can always hear him grunt when he's rebounding." At the end of the season Boston owner Irv Levin switched teams with Buffalo owner John Brown, and Washington came to San Diego when Levin moved the team.

Even now, rehabilitated, accepted by teammates and fans in two different cities, he was aware that he had been part of something terrible and frightening, that he was on the edge of having committed, however involuntarily, a dark deed. He was also, in a more pragmatic way, aware that he was a target now, not just for fans, but for other physical players. Unlike anyone else in the league, he dared not get in a fight, so there were sharp limits to how much contact he initiated. He had a dream, more than once: He was at a restaurant and went to the men's room. There a man pulled a gun on him and, terrified, he hit the man. Then Kermit ran from the men's room to the parking lot, where he was picked up by two cops, one white, one black. They accused him of killing a man. The black cop shackled him and the white cop put a black hood over his head, and they took him to a courtroom. There a judge looked down and announced that he was guilty of murder. Washington understood that nightmare perfectly. ■

DAVID HALBERSTAM, a Pulitzer Prize winner for his reporting from Vietnam, is the author of *The Best and the Brightest* and *The Powers That Be*. His latest book, *The Breaks of the Game*, was published by Knopf in November.



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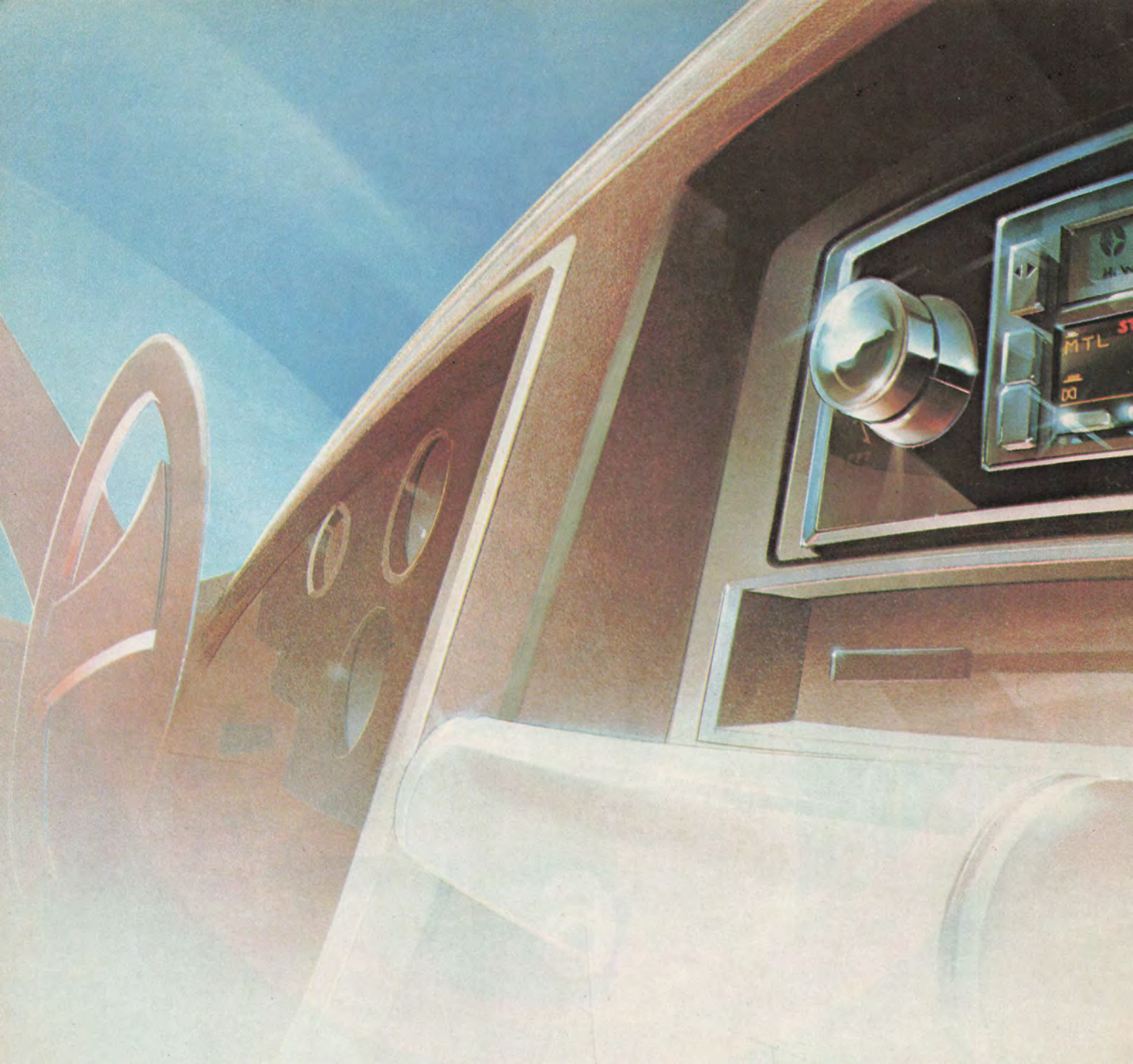
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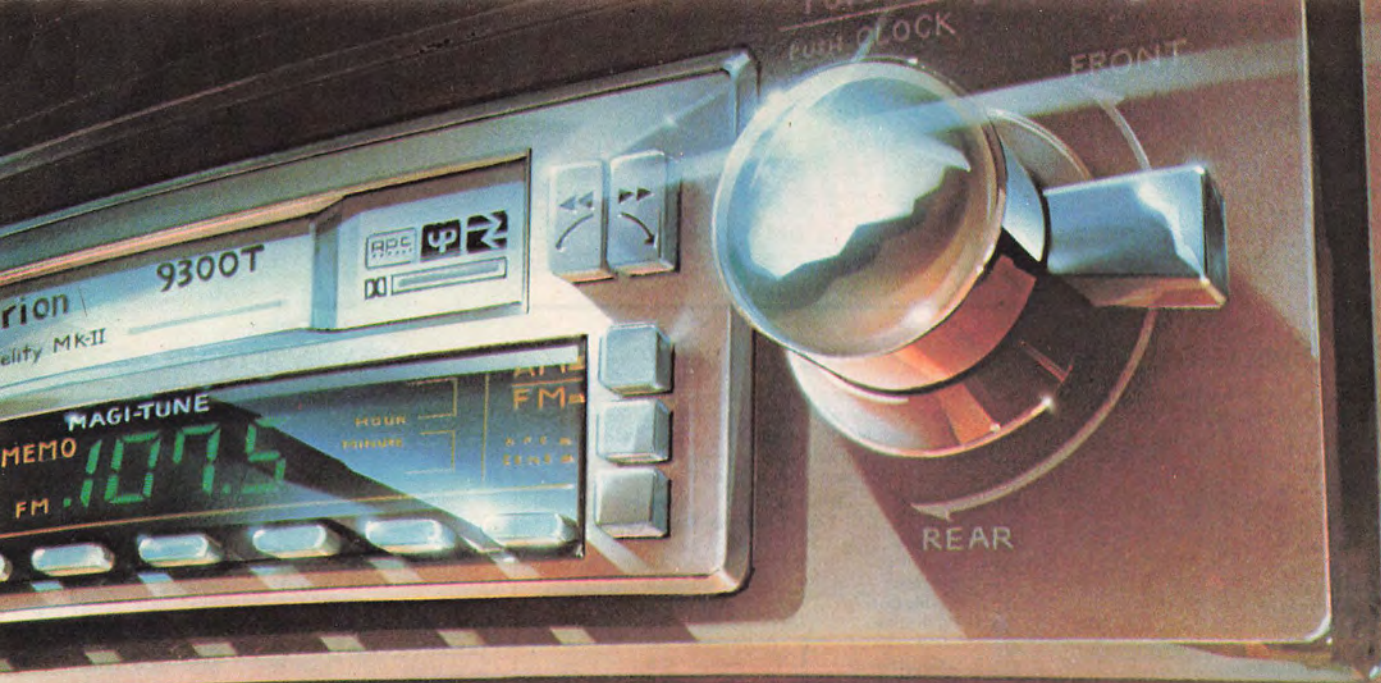
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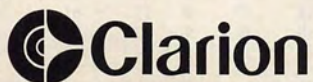
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# Numbers

## ALPHAHOMERS

The following players are the home-run leaders for each letter of the alphabet:

A — Hank Aaron	755
B — Ernie Banks	512
C — Orlando Cepeda	379
D — Joe DiMaggio	361
E — Del Ennis	288
F — Jimmy Foxx	534
G — Lou Gehrig	493
H — Frank Howard	382
I — Monte Irvin	99
J — Reggie Jackson	425
K — Harmon Killebrew	573
L — Greg Luzinski	244
M — Willie Mays	660
N — Graig Nettles	294
O — Mel Ott	511
P — Tony Perez	357
Q — Joe Quinn	30
R — Babe Ruth	714
S — Willie Stargell	472
T — Frank Thomas	286
U — Del Unser	87
V — Mickey Vernon	172
W — Ted Williams	521
X —	—
Y — Carl Yastrzemski	426
Z — Gus Zernial	237

## TOP 10 STORY

No team has dominated college football the past decade like Alabama, which has finished in the UPI Top 10 (voted by the coaches) each year, winning two national championships in the process. Below are all teams which have finished in the Top 10 at least twice.

	Years in Top 10	Streak	Average Ranking*	National Champs
Alabama	10	10	2.9	2
Oklahoma	9**	6	3.2	1
Nebraska	9	7	7.3	1
Michigan	9	1	5.4	—
Penn State	7	1	6.6	—
USC	6	—	2.3	3
Ohio State	6	—	3.6	—
Notre Dame	5	1	5.0	1
Texas	5	—	6.8	—
Pittsburgh	4	2	4.0	1
Arkansas	4	—	7.0	—
Georgia	3	1	6.3	1
Auburn	3	—	6.0	—
Arizona State	3	—	6.0	—
Houston	2	—	4.5	—
Florida State	2	2	6.5	—
UCLA	2	—	7.0	—
LSU	2	—	10.0	—

\*Average ranking includes only those years a team finished in the Top 10

\*\* On NCAA probation in 1974  
Compiled by Mike Francesa

## NBA 20/20 CLUB

The next time an argument erupts concerning the most dominant individual in NBA history, consider this: Of the 13 times a player averaged 20 points and 20 rebounds a game, Wilt Chamberlain did it 10 times. Below is the complete list of NBA 20/20 players, with a minimum of 50 games needed to qualify.

	Pts.	Reb.	Team
Chamberlain, Phila., 1961-62	50.4	25.7	49-31
Chamberlain, SF, 1962-63	44.8	24.3	31-49
Chamberlain, Phila., 1960-61	38.4	27.2	46-33
Chamberlain, Phila., 1959-60	37.6	27.0	49-26
Chamberlain, Phila., 1965-66	33.5	24.6	55-25
Chamberlain, SF, 1963-64	36.9	22.3	48-32
Chamberlain, SF/Phila., 1964-65	34.7	22.9	*
Chamberlain, Phila., 1966-67**	24.1	24.2	68-13
Pettit, St. Louis, 1960-61	27.9	20.3	51-28
Chamberlain, Phila., 1967-68	24.3	23.8	62-20
Lucas, Cincinnati, 1965-66	21.5	21.1	45-35
Chamberlain, LA, 1968-69	20.5	21.1	55-27
Lucas, Cincinnati, 1964-65	21.4	20.0	48-32

\*Traded from San Francisco (17-63) to Philadelphia (40-40)

\*\*Championship team

Compiled by John Valerino, sports editor *The Ledger* (Lakeland, Florida)

## KEY PLAYS IN NFL GAMES

By looking at certain key plays—such as TD passes, interceptions (I), fumbles recovered (FR), sacks, TD passes allowed (TDPA), interceptions thrown (IT), fumbles lost (FL) and sacks permitted (SP)—one can usually figure how teams are doing. This year's biggest exceptions are the Vikings, Chiefs and Buccaneers. Statistics are through week 10.

	TD Passes	I	FR	Sacks	Positive Rating	TDPA	IT	FL	SP	Negative Rating	Total Rating	W-L-T
<b>AFC EAST</b>												
Miami	14	14	8	24	+60	17	14	6	13	-50	+10	7-2-1
Buffalo	21	14	9	33	+77	14	13	12	7	-46	+31	6-4
NY Jets	19	13	9	38	+79	12	8	11	22	-53	+26	5-4-1
New England	12	12	12	13	+49	10	26	10	27	-73	-24	2-8
Baltimore	13	10	8	9	+40	29	14	11	29	-83	-43	1-9
<b>AFC CENTRAL</b>												
Cincinnati	18	9	13	21	+61	15	6	7	23	-51	+10	7-3
Pittsburgh	13	14	6	22	+55	11	11	13	10	-45	+10	5-5
Houston	12	13	8	16	+49	17	13	16	25	-71	-22	5-5
Cleveland	13	7	14	17	+51	16	15	12	20	-63	-12	4-6
<b>AFC WEST</b>												
Denver	18	17	16	24	+75	6	10	12	40	-68	+7	7-3
San Diego	21	14	14	27	+76	17	12	13	16	-58	+18	6-4
Kansas City	8	18	13	14	+53	12	16	20	21	-69	-16	6-4
Oakland	7	8	14	37	+66	8	21	11	26	-66	0	4-6
Seattle	11	12	12	22	+57	13	10	12	29	-64	-7	3-7
<b>NFC EAST</b>												
Philadelphia	16	18	13	28	+75	8	10	10	14	-42	+33	8-2
Dallas	15	27	9	29	+80	13	10	11	21	-55	+25	8-2
NY Giants	13	11	12	27	+63	9	12	10	37	-68	-5	5-5
Washington	11	16	9	19	+55	12	15	15	19	-61	-6	4-6
St. Louis	12	7	11	21	+51	24	17	11	28	-80	-29	3-7
<b>NFC CENTRAL</b>												
Minnesota	18	9	9	18	+54	15	13	13	21	-62	-8	6-4
Tampa Bay	12	20	10	12	+54	5	9	8	10	-32	+22	5-5
Detroit	10	13	14	27	+64	15	16	11	23	-65	-1	4-6
Green Bay	11	14	17	25	+67	12	16	12	36	-76	-9	4-6
Chicago	8	9	13	12	+42	15	11	14	16	-56	-14	3-7
<b>NFC WEST</b>												
San Francisco	14	18	12	25	+69	12	8	9	16	-45	+24	8-2
Atlanta	22	14	14	22	+72	14	17	9	21	-61	+11	5-5
Los Angeles	11	12	12	27	+62	13	18	9	33	-73	-11	5-5
New Orleans	6	13	12	18	+49	15	15	15	24	-69	-20	3-7

## SCORING LEADERS

How important is Larry Bird to Boston? In games in which Bird led or tied his team in scoring, Boston was 31-7. Not surprisingly, scoring champ Adrian Dantley (30.7) led Utah 66 times, tops in the NBA.

1. Adrian Dantley, Utah	66
2. George Gervin, San Antonio	64
3. Julius Erving, Philadelphia	58
Moses Malone, Houston	58
5. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Los Angeles	50
6. Mike Mitchell, Cleveland	49
7. Otis Birdsong, Kansas City	42
8. Larry Bird, Boston	38
9. Freeman Williams, San Diego	37
10. Lloyd Free, Golden State	36
David Thompson, Denver	36
12. Truck Robinson, Phoenix	34
13. John Drew, Atlanta	32
Mike Newlin, New Jersey	32
15. Marques Johnson, Milwaukee	30
Bill Cartwright, New York	30
17. Robert Parish, Boston	28
Bernard King, Golden State	28
19. Cliff Robinson, New Jersey	27
20. Elvin Hayes, Washington	26
Jack Sikma, Seattle	26

## TEAM'S WINNING PERCENTAGE WHEN SCORING LEADER

### The Best

1. Junior Bridgeman, Milwaukee	15-2	.882
2. Larry Bird, Boston	31-7	.816
3. Walter Davis, Phoenix	16-4	.800
4. Jamaal Wilkes, Los Angeles	17-6	.739
5. Truck Robinson, Phoenix	25-9	.735

### The Worst

1. Geoff Huston, Dallas-Cleveland	3-18	.143
2. Cliff Robinson, New Jersey	8-19	.296
3. Mike Newlin, New Jersey	10-22	.313
4. Eddie Johnson, Atlanta	7-15	.318
5. Adrian Dantley, Utah	22-44	.333

Compiled by Jerry Tabb

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# The Good Doctor

**I**n a recent football game, a scuffle started and, according to an announcer, "Cooler Heads prevailed." Who are the Cooler Heads and how do they win so many fights?

N. P., Waukegan, Illinois

The Cooler Heads are a gang of toughs who hang around the cooler on the sidelines, quaffing beers and waiting for action. As soon as a couple of hotheads start throwing punches, the Cooler Heads charge out to join the fray. So ugly is their reputation, however, that their mere appearance is usually enough to scatter the combatants.

**C**an Joe Frazier possibly succeed in his comeback bid?

R. Z., Burlington, Vermont

Once you quit smokin', it's usually better not to start again.

**D**o you believe those allegations of gambling in the NFL?

E. D., San Francisco, California

A good friend of ours on the Raiders assures us the rumors are untrue. "I'll give you 8-5 they never prove a thing," he said.

**W**hat pro team holds the record for having on its alltime roster the most names that could apply to members of either sex?

B. P., Woodbury, Connecticut

The Los Angeles Lakers, with Connie Hawkins, Gail Goodrich, Pat Riley, Corky Calhoun, Adrian Dantley, Happy Hairston, Cazzie Russell and, of course, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.

**W**hy does Taiwan always win the Little League World Series?

A. M., Velarde, New Mexico

Because Taiwan has the world's best

12-year-old baseball players. Now the interesting question is why this is so.

**G**ood evening. I am distinguished physician from Orient. Recently, I was visiting in your excellent country in order to be presenting research paper to World Health Organization. While observing your interesting American television in the hotel room, I was surprised to hear one of your enthusiastic announcing personnel advise audience as follows: "Baseball fever, catch it." This puzzled my curiosity. Please explain in your intelligent manner what is nature of this disease, unknown in my country, and why American officials would be recommending to citizens to become ill.

S. N., Rangoon, Burma

The dread baseball fever has afflicted America for many years and has also spread to other countries. Young males are hardest hit but victims of all ages and sexes have been recorded. This year, the disease has taken an alarming turn, inexplicably vanishing in the midst of the summer—when it usually rages—then returning to linger into the colder months. Those worst afflicted are committed to large park-like sanitariums to harmlessly act out their bizarre compulsive fantasies. Thousands of sympathetic volunteers visit them, contributing millions of dollars for their treatment. Since many of these volunteers are violence prone, the government encourages them to visit the so-called "ballparks" to keep them off the streets for as long as possible.

**I**s God a Dodger fan?

R. D., Americus, Georgia

No; it only seems that way.

**T**he other day I catch my hubby sneaking out. So I say, "Where do you think you're going?" and he says, "Fly fishing." So I bop him over the head

with the frying pan. I mean, fly fishing, come on. But then I visit him in the intensive care unit at St. Luke's and he keeps saying fly fishing is legit. He says, "If you don't believe me, ask the Good Doctor." So?

M. N., Detroit, Michigan

Fly fishing is increasingly popular in many areas. A challenging sport, it depends on the fisherman's ability to expertly manipulate a tiny fishing pole barely visible to the naked eye. When a fly alights, a line baited with a miniscule piece of tuna is cast in his direction. Should the fly take the bait, the line is reeled in and the hooked fly is tossed in the creel. After bagging his limit, the fly fisherman repairs to his favorite tavern and lies about the big one that flew away.

**W**hat is the NBH doing to end the deplorable wave of robberies against referees?

D. I., Providence, Rhode Island

The robbery issue has been of concern to NBH officials all season, particularly after the vicious mugging of head lanechecker Wesley Parsley during the Oxnard-Rangoon game. Parsley was knocked down and beaten during a roughpile on the sidelines and had \$140 taken at knifepoint. During a lineup at the office of NBH commissioner Elwood "Bony" Karp, Parsley identified Oxnard facepuller Beast Tuttle as his assailant but Tuttle's agent got him off on a technical foul. Karp is now considering a staffing change that would have all refs work in two-man teams and carry guns. The players' association has contended that this would take the fun out of the game. ■

Are you among the sportlorn? Don't be ashamed. Help is now available. The Good Doctor knows all, tells some. Send your problems, questions and gripes to *The Good Doctor, Inside Sports*, 444 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10022.



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# The Fan

BY ANTHONY RICCI

## When Does An Hour Last 12½ Minutes?

**Y**es, as we approach the latest Super Bowl, I'm fed up. I've cursed at my last Erma Bombeck column on the subject, sneered through my last Joan Rivers monologue about it, glared at a final comic strip parody of a poor fan's wife trying to take him away from a fourth and goal because the house is on fire. Can't a bona fide American husband enjoy a mere 12½ minutes of bona fide American pro football on a Sunday, Monday or Thursday without all this constant abuse? That's all I ever ask for, 12½ minutes.

Twelve and a half minutes is the average playing time of an entire pro football game. Yes, that even includes the Super Bowl. Forget the official game clock; 60 minutes does not an official game make. After all, what self-respecting fan would watch a football game for the huddles? Who would risk the wrath of a football widow for the sake of watching a referee spot the ball? Yet those two things take up a great deal of playing time in a game.

The game is played from the moment the center snaps the ball to the instant a ballcarrier is tackled or goes out of bounds, a pass drops incomplete, a ball sails through the uprights, or a player crosses the goal line. The results of all this are running plays perhaps four or five seconds long, passing plays slightly longer and a two-minute offense with plays that take about 72 seconds.

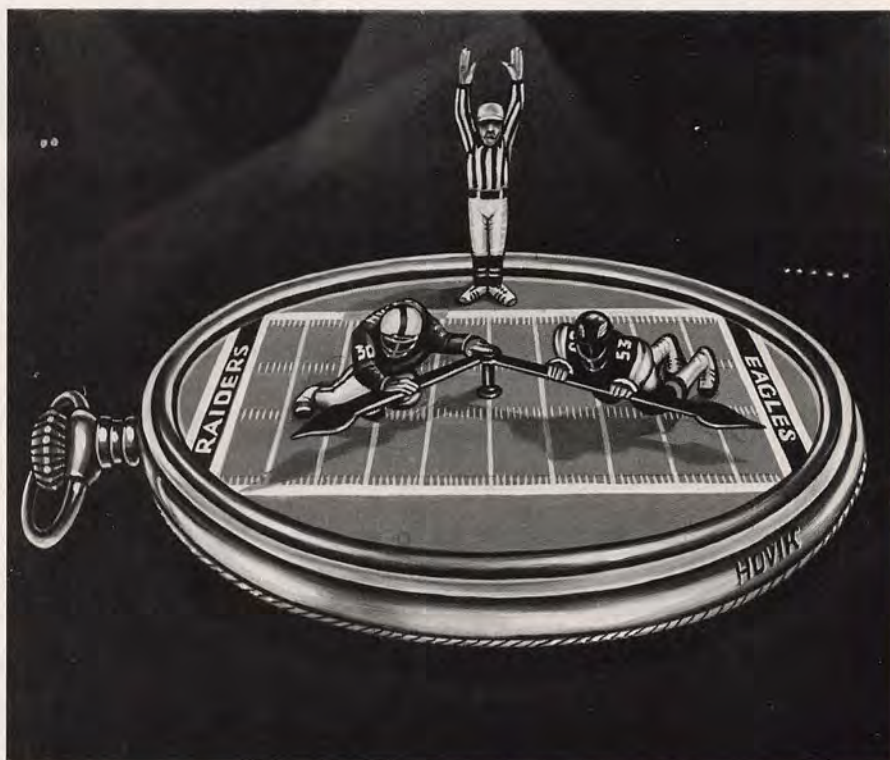
That translates into a 12½-minute game.

In the last Super Bowl, Jim Plunkett set the football world on its ear with drives through the heart of the Philadelphia defense and threw scoring passes—two yards to Cliff Branch (4.5 seconds), 80 yards to Kenny King

(13.5 seconds) and 29 yards to Branch again (8 seconds). Rod Martin's three interceptions may have set a Super Bowl record, but they lasted a total of 27.5 seconds. Philadelphia's 13-play drive for its only touchdown may have consumed 5½ minutes, but the plays took only 57 seconds, culminating in an eight-yard pass from Ron Jaworski

and made close to \$13 million—was also twice as long as the game itself. It paid the NFL \$6 million to televise the event, and at 12½ minutes long, NBC brass figured the game to be worth less than \$500,000 a minute.

Bryant Gumbel and Mike Adamle were on the tube for two hours prior to the kickoff (7 seconds). The NFL



to Keith Krepfle (4 seconds). That adds up to 57.5 seconds on the highlight film. It takes the average American that long to tie his shoelaces.

And for all this, Super Bowl XV lured a quantum audience of 100 million viewers—a number that likely will increase next month. More than 75,000 more saw the game in person, paying \$30 and up for a ticket. The halftime show, with all those Mardi Gras'ers Mardi Gras'ing all over the field, stretched out to about 30 minutes, or more than twice as long as it took for all the plays in the game.

Commercial time—for which NBC charged advertisers \$550,000 a minute

makes us wait for two weeks after the playoffs to reinforce the idea that the next 12½ minutes of football we see will be for the championship of the world.

For all that, Super Bowl XV's 150 or so plays—including kickoffs, penalties and extra-point attempts—added up to exactly 12 minutes and 27 seconds.

And I watched them all, stopwatch firmly in hand, lest there be some question of my spending too much time watching football. ■

ANTHONY RICCI's wife still believes an NFL game lasts three hours.

ILLUSTRATION BY HOVIA DILAKIAN

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